Commentary

VOLUME NINETY-SIX • NUMBER SIX • DECEMBER 1993

When, Where & How to Use Force

Three Views

Joshua Muravchik
Fareed Zakaria
A.J. Bacevich

The Real Lessons of Camp David
Rael Jean Isaac

Thirty Years of the "New York Review"
Joseph Epstein

Saying Kaddish
Jacob Sloan

Society & Edith Wharton
Richard Grenier

Books in Review: Richard Pipes / Suzanne Garment / Laurie Mylroie / Richard Brookhiser / William Kristol

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Letters from Readers

Sex Education

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

When Dana Mack requested an opportunity to visit the Falmouth public schools to collect information for a book, there were signals that she represented a critical point of view. We did not close our door or hide components of the program. However, there is no question from the tone and misinformation in her article, "What the Sex Educators Teach" [August], that she is a polemicist who came to Falmouth to substantiate a predetermined point of view. Before writing this letter, I talked to several of those with whom Dana Mack met in February 1993 so I would have a clear sense of what she heard and what she saw. What she presents in her article reflects heavily the unsubstantiated charges of the Concerned Citizens group in Falmouth and others nationally who have strong opposition to reality-based sex education.

For example, Mrs. Mack earnestly builds a conspiracy theory to dismiss the community support for the condom-availability program; she claims citizens were "subjected to a two-year propaganda campaign" about the dangers of AIDS. Mrs. Mack has seriously distorted the chronology of events to make this claim; the training of faculty took place simultaneously with the debate on condom availability during the fall of 1991. She states: "Two years before the condom-availability program was instituted, a task force of educators and health professionals embarked on a campaign to publicize the disease . . . to town employees and community groups." This education campaign in fact took place in the late winter and spring of 1992, months *after* the condom-availability program was instituted in January 1992.

Mrs. Mack asserts that Falmouth health instructors essentially promote sexual activity; she states without an iota of documentation that "over a period of many weeks" students receive information about "how to initiate casual sex" and other graphic topics, and "only 45 minutes each semester are devoted to sexual abstinence." Those of us in charge of the program are stunned by this untruthful representation. Mrs. Mack did not spend nearly enough time to make such judgments. Since she does not cite any source, I am left to believe that this false information comes from the Concerned Citizens, a few of whom are enemies of the health-education program as well as the condom-availability program.

Helen Ladd, the department head for health in Falmouth and a teacher of the health-issues curriculum, contests Mrs. Mack's interpretations of conversations and observations during the visit. Mrs. Mack seriously distorts one interview when she states, "Marriage, says Ladd, is never mentioned as a prerequisite to parenthood." The Falmouth course supports the established institutions of American society but recognizes the diversity of our society in the 1990's. Similarly, Mrs. Mack's parody of a class discussion on date rape concludes with a statement of outcomes that she has created to discredit comprehensive, reality-based sex education.

We in Falmouth do not claim that our programs are perfect, but the one-sided diatribe by Dana Mack represents the same old arguments from the Right concerning sex education rather than an analysis that contributes to understanding the issues. Falmouth's program was mashed through her predetermined set of precepts. Your readers deserve better thinking.

PETER L. CLARK
Assistant Superintendent
Falmouth Public Schools
Falmouth, Massachusetts

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I am never surprised by COMMENTARY's editorial policy. But when bias becomes distortion, as it does in Dana Mack's hatchet job on sex education in my community of Falmouth, Massachusetts, a response is clearly in order.

As a founding participant in Falmouth's HIV/AIDS task force, I had firsthand exposure to the tactics of Falmouth's so-called Concerned Citizens. Like its counterparts throughout the country, this group did its level best to subvert the goals of the task force. Manifesting the basest kind of ignorance about HIV infection and AIDS, displaying unconscionable antagonism toward homosexuals,

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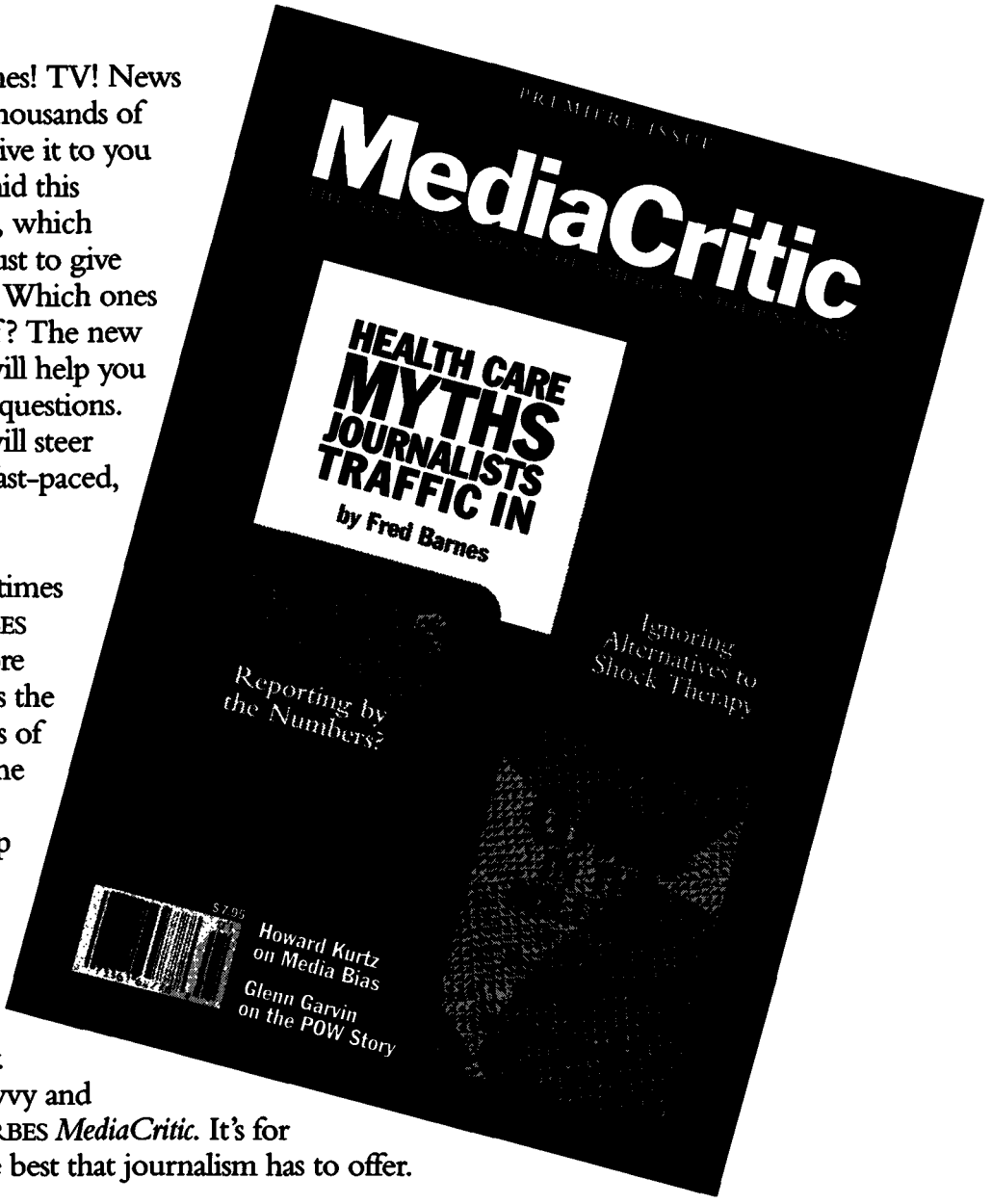

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and resorting to outright lies and distortions when the condom-availability plan was brought up at our town meeting, the Concerned Citizens received a clear message from the citizens of Falmouth when our town meeting voted to establish and fund an HIV/AIDS community partnership. This partnership, an outgrowth of the citizen-based task force, continues its important work of informing every citizen in our community of the real threat posed by HIV infection.

Mrs. Mack would do well to listen to the Centers for Disease Control which report that teenagers represent one of the fastest growing rates of HIV infection in the country and that risky behavior, not membership in an "at-risk" group, is what determines the threat of HIV infection and AIDS. With the metropolitan communities of New Bedford and Boston just a car-ride away, no Falmouth parent should be so naive as to think that drug use and HIV infection will stay on the other side of the Cape Cod canal.

As the representative of a tradition which does not condone premarital sex, I am not complacent about contemporary sexual mores as played out in our youth culture. Nor am I willing to rely exclusively on "abstinence-based" education which falls on too many deaf adolescent ears. There is a need for both condom availability in our schools and morally appropriate messages about sexuality in our synagogues, churches, and homes.

As for our high-school students' "innate conservatism . . . in the matter of homosexuality," how can we expect otherwise when they live in a society steeped in intolerance of gays and lesbians?

I am afraid that the picture Mrs. Mack paints of our community and its serious attempts to deal with HIV infection is not a real one but, rather, one she had been prepared to create before she ever arrived.

[Rabbi] Elias J. Lieberman
Falmouth Jewish Congregation
East Falmouth, Massachusetts

To the Editor of Commentary:

I would like to commend Commentary for publishing Dana Mack's "What the Sex Educators Teach." I am sure that her article . . . will provoke discussion and stimulate parental investigation of what constitutes sex education in schools across the country.

Falmouth is no adolescent Peyton Place and our teenagers are no different from those in similar communitites. But Falmouth is different in that the most radical condom-distribution program in the country was pushed through by the school committee here at the behest of the school administration. This program dovetailed with an ideologically driven sex-education program euphemistically described by school administrators as "reality based." The condom-distribution program, now being contested in the courts by a group of parents, is still a contentious issue in our community.

I was first contacted by Mrs. Mack some time after she had conducted her research in Falmouth. I was surprised that, at the suggestion of school administrators, she got in touch with our organization since we had not assessed or objected to the sex-education program other than to question the use of the book *Changing Bodies, Changing Lives* as a reference text. Her description of the sex-education program at Falmouth High and her quotations from sex/health administrators confirmed many parents' worst fears. At best, Falmouth's sex-education program is ineffective. At worst, it is contaminating and degrading our children's moral, ethical, and social-value systems. Mrs. Mack's report should be a wake-up call for parents in our community and in other communities that are implementing or considering similar programs. . . .

In other communities, the "progressive" Falmouth model is being employed to promote similar programs and policies. We must all ask ourselves who will be responsible to our children for failed . . . condom policies, explicit "reality-based" or "how-to" sex-education programs, and the promulgation of sexual-liberation attitudes that defy the traditional morals, values, and principles of society and our common Judeo-Christian ethic.

Jim Remillard
Concerned Citizens of Falmouth
Falmouth, Massachusetts

To the Editor of Commentary:

Dana Mack seems to say that teenage pregnancy and sexually-transmitted diseases have increased in Falmouth because the sex-education programs teach male-bashing and an amoral "if-it-feels-good-do-it" attitude toward all manner of sexual activity. Yet she also says that the teachings on the use of condoms and acceptance of homosexuality go in one ear and out the other. I would be interested to know why she thinks some parts of the programs are so powerful and some are so powerless.

Roger Sweeny
Norwood, Massachusetts

Dana Mack writes:

I thank Peter L. Clark for correcting my errant assumption that the Falmouth schools' AIDS task force had been engaged in a community-wide AIDS awareness campaign before 1992. I had been told in Falmouth that the school system's AIDS task force was in existence three years prior to the condom-availability program; that it alone (and not one of the many Cape Cod communal-health organizations involved in HIV testing, counseling, and information) had sponsored HIV training for town employees and community groups; and that it was a precursor to the Falmouth citizens' AIDS task force. I assumed that all this community involvement took place over a longer period of time than it did.

I am, however, sorry that the rest of Mr. Clark's critique of my article offers so little factual or intellectual challenge; it seems to offer, rather, simply gratuitous insult to my integrity as a researcher and writer. According to Mr. Clark, I am a "polemicist who came to Falmouth to substantiate a predetermined point of view"; I "build conspiracy theories"; and—worst of all—I "parody" high-school students.

How can I answer these aspersions? Suffice it to say that if I were a polemicist, I could have stayed home to write an article about sex education and saved considerable research time and costs. If I hated youth enough to parody its vulnerabilities, I would hardly be writing a book on the declining well-being of children in America. As for conspiracy theories, I might build one (albeit for the first time) on learning from Mr. Clark that the schools' task force launched its major community-wide AIDS-education campaign in the spring of 1992, just when public debate on an upcoming referendum on the condom-availability program was in full swing.

But in fact, I did not go to Falmouth in pursuit of polemic, parody, or conspiracy theory. I went to

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ascertain the facts about comprehensive sex-education and condom-availability programs. I wanted to learn the answers to the following questions: are these programs really necessary, and do they work? From the Falmouth example, the answer to both questions, I am afraid, is an objective No.

It is clear from the tenor of Mr. Clark's and Rabbi Lieberman's letters—as well as Jim Remillard's—that my article fed into, if it did not aggravate, a contentious communal conflict on the subject of the Falmouth schools' approach to teenage sexual behavior. From the beginning of my research, I have lived with the discomfiting knowledge that whatever my final judgments were in regard to the successes or failures of Falmouth's sex-education program, they were bound to make some people in the community feel angry and ill-used. Yet, as deeply as I regret this, I believe that my investigation of the program was a worthwhile endeavor. Falmouth, perhaps more than any other community in the nation, can tell us about the prospects of experimental social policies which (having now been endorsed by the Clinton administration) are rapidly spreading in school districts across the nation. Indeed, Falmouth is an ideal community for testing the effectiveness of contemporary sex-education and condom-availability programs: these programs are by now well established there, and serve a public-school community of manageable size and mixed population.

Indeed, I am convinced that my article does not come even close to exhausting the lessons which can be learned from the Falmouth model. And that is where Roger Sweeny's letter is to the point. He asks a really interesting question: how is it that some aspects of the comprehensive sex-education program—for example, the talk of sexual activity as a teenage "choice"—powerfully influence young people, while others—for example, tolerance of homosexuality—"go in one ear and out the other"? I can only conclude, and this on the basis of classroom observations and interviews with parents, that the teenage psychosexual make-up is a fragile and highly conformist one; that teenagers confronted too early with issues of sexual identity will be all too anxious to prove, by actions as

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The PLO and Yassir Arafat. Israel is making this fateful arrangement with a terror organization. According to its "covenant", which has never been rescinded, the PLO has only one aim: the destruction of the state of Israel through force and violence. The aim is and has always been the notorious "phased plan": to eliminate Israel in two stages—first by creating a Palestinian state in any territory vacated by Israel and then using that state to foment an allied Arab assault against the truncated and critically vulnerable Jewish state.

Until recently, Arafat was officially declared a terrorist by the United States government and was not allowed entry into our country. He is personally responsible for hundreds of assassinations and terrorist attacks. The fact that such a man could appear on the White House lawn, that he could shake hands with the President of the United States, and with the Prime Minister of Israel is truly astonishing.

"If it yielded the "West Bank", Israel would be only 9 miles wide at its narrow waist—it would take no major military effort to slice it in half and to destroy it. No country should expose itself to such peril".

A mortal danger to Israel. Turning over control of the Gaza strip and any part of the "West Bank" to the Arabs puts Israel in mortal peril. The basic conflict is not between Israel and the "Palestinians", with whom some accommodation, some arrangement of autonomy, could certainly be reached. The basic conflict is with the Arab nations, all of which, with the sole exception of Egypt, are still in a state of war with Israel. They are armed to the teeth, not just with "conventional" weapons, but with missiles that even today can reach any part of Israel, and with weapons of mass destruction—chemical, biological and nuclear.

With the "West Bank" in Arab hands, missiles won't be needed. Mortars and shoulder-held Stingers would suffice to threaten every commercial flight into and out of Israel, to impede the take-off of military airplanes and to threaten and rain destruction on the principal cities of Israel and its most important industrial, commercial and military installations. Sure, the world would insist that the new Palestinian state be demilitarized. But does anybody really believe that with Israel surrounded by mortal enemies, they would allow such a military vacuum to exist for any length of time—even in the unlikely case that the Palestinians would so desire? If it yielded the "West Bank", Israel would be only 9 miles wide at its narrow waist—it would take no major military effort to slice it in half and to destroy it. No country should expose itself to such peril. But with the Judean hills in enemy hands, and without the elaborate warning system on those hills, Israel is totally indefensible and at the mercy of its enemies. That is the opinion of 100 U.S. generals and admirals who so reported to the President and to the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

We all want peace and, surely, besieged Israel, which has been under constant attack since the day of its creation, wants peace more than anybody. And it is likely that such fervent wish for peace has led Israel into making fateful concessions to Yassir Arafat and the PLO. It will be almost impossible to reverse what has been done. The process of empowering the Palestinians will almost certainly result in a Palestinian state. Will it, as we are told, be "democratic" and peaceful? Not likely! Every one of the 22 Arab states is totalitarian, ruled autocratically, and ruthlessly abusive of human rights. Another Lebanon, carved on Israel's back, with never-ending strife and bloodshed is much more likely—a source of constant terrorist attacks against Israel and ultimately the source of a new Mid-East war. In such a war, Israel's ability to defend itself and to prevail would be in serious question.

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well as words, that their sexual orientation is the majority one. I admit, however, that this is speculation by a layman. I would hope that psychologists might soon have something to say on it.

Balkanization

To the Editor of Commentary:

Patrick Glynn's "The Age of Balkanization" [July] is a dangerously superficial assessment of one of the most significant problems facing us. The process of Balkanization within multiethnic nations like Yugoslavia often has some of its roots in the political dynamics and ambitions of other countries. Mr. Glynn totally misses this point. Specifically, in the case of Yugoslavia, the role of Germany cannot be discounted. Germany's almost immediate recognition of Croatia and Slovenia—two of its client-states in World War II—and the pressure it put upon the French and others in the European Community (EC) to support recognition both emboldened the tyrants and further undercut those who held to the notion of a multiethnic Yugoslav state. Even today, Germany exerts substantial pressure within the UN and elsewhere to see that sanctions are not applied to Croatia for its ever-growing murderous role in the destruction of Bosnia and the Bosnians. This only intensifies the paranoia of many Serbs and nourishes those who can then use Serbia's growing isolation and an apparent double standard for their own purposes. The new Russian state is playing a similar role in destabilizing Georgia and the Baltic republics by feeding the fires and political egos of ethnic and linguistic radicals. Much the same can be said of many other places and many other nations.

As long as nations and peoples are useful pawns of larger, more aggressive nations and communities with dynastic impulses of one sort or another, ethnic and religious divisions will be all-too-useful points of cleavage and fragmentation. The tortured history of the Kurds leaps immediately to mind as being archetypical of this situation. The key question, which Mr. Glynn also evades, is why this remains so. Instead of providing an answer, he blames postmodernist literature professors, blacks who want to be African-Americans in the same way that others are permitted to be Irish-Americans, Italo-Americans, or Finnish-Americans, etc., etc.

I do not mean to suggest for a moment that Yugoslavia could or should have been "saved." It was throughout its history a place where the power and authority of the center, often using terrorism and the suppression of legitimate ethnic and regional grievances, coerced behavior in the periphery. But others bear culpability, too. We all let those who believed in a genuinely multiethnic, multireligious, and democratic Yugoslavian republic down miserably. We could not wait until the nation came apart to demonstrate our wisdom that such a place could not possibly survive the death of Tito. And some of us, like Germany, helped to make it happen, at least more quickly if, indeed, it was inevitable.

Mr. Glynn is also far too self-congratulatory about the American experience. Ask Native Americans—oops, I should say "Indians" for his benefit—about how we in the United States have dealt with significant ethnic differences. But here many of our cleavages have been ones of class, though in the case of blacks, class and race have been inexorably linked in our indigenous brand of racism as perhaps nowhere else. And still other significant divisions have been regional.

It is our great fortune that our transcending notion of nationhood and "*civis*"—which sadly seems to be eroding—and perhaps a lot of luck and land have permitted us a different history. I agree that we seem to be headed in a dreadful direction and that is precisely why the serious nature of the problems that confront us requires careful, insightful, and sensitive analysis. Gratuitous slaps at multiculturalism simply will not suffice. But then Mr. Glynn's piece is extraordinarily thin and adds very little to our understanding.

Mark B. Lapping
Lawrenceville, New Jersey

To the Editor of Commentary:

Patrick Glynn, in "The Age of Balkanization," makes an excellent contribution so long as he sticks to generalities, but fails miserably when he gets down to specifics. I have in mind his references to what used to be Yugoslavia. He lumps two Serbian leaders with Saddam Hussein and calls them "new tyrants" motivated "by nothing more complicated than primitive ethnic fanaticism." To anyone who knows the Yugoslav situation, this demonstrates that Mr. Glynn does not have a grasp of the basic facts about that tragic country or its history.

Moreover, it is passing strange that he fails to mention the Croats, Muslims, or Slovenes—who were in the forefront of what he bemoans as "fragmentation" and "splintering."

And he is less than honest when he says that the EC leaders "have worked to forge a unitary Europe," but fails to say one word about what those leaders did to aid in the demise of Yugoslavia, a charter member of the League of Nations and the United Nations.

Alex N. Dragnich
Bowie, Maryland

To the Editor of Commentary:

In his article, Patrick Glynn takes the first step in recognizing just how dangerous the world has become since the demise of the Soviet superpower and the eclipse of global bipolarity. As he notes, "everywhere one sees well-established nation-states threatened with disunion, and even in countries without explicit separatist movements, the unifying themes of political life are increasingly under attack." According to Mr. Glynn, Balkanization threatens to devour all Western nations. In Canada, England, Italy, France, and Germany, Mr. Glynn reports that the process of disunification is already under way. And even in the United States, he argues, our national political unity seems to be threatened by the absence of an international political opponent. . . .

So much for the first step. Amazingly, Mr. Glynn fails to see that the effort by George Bush and others to unify humanity into a "new world order" based on what he calls "democratic universalism" is every bit as threatening to the long-term survival of the modern nation-state as is the particularism of ethno-racial separatism. National political unity cannot withstand ultimate progression to a single "nation of nations" any more than infinite regression to multiple ethnic or racial semi-sovereignties. If multiculturalism represents the fragmentation and decay of the nation's moral authority, then internationalism, or, to use Mr. Glynn's term, cosmopolitanism, heralds the collapse or

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eclipse of the nation's sovereign authority. In both cases, the same result is achieved; the dooming of the nation-state.

It was in the world of nation-states that the high ideals of Western civilization truly flourished. Freedom, democracy, equality, the primacy of reason, and, perhaps most importantly, the rights of citizenship may have originated in the "master idea" of Greek philosophy and may have been sustained in some way by imperial Rome. But these values ripened only in the modern world; that is, only when man substituted an international system of multiple territorial nation-states for a single universal institution of imperial reach.

In our times, as Mr. Glynn knows well, nation-states proved to be the most effective bulwark against the barbarism which lurks in all universalist ideologies, such as Communism, Nazism, and, as we shall regretfully discover, the new world order. What defeated Hitler and later Stalin's inheritors was not merely the moral superiority of democratic ideals but the patriotism of the soldiers who killed and died on behalf of their countries. Without the patriotic fervor which only a sovereign nation-state can generate, it is highly doubtful that the freedom and liberty which we all cherish would have perforated the "tissue of lies" spawned by both Nazi and Communist ideology. Sadly, if the deteriorating fortunes of the modern nation-state are not reversed, it is certain that the master ideas of Western civilization will suffocate in the "tissue of lies" which the new world order is bound to spawn.

Mr. Glynn is wrong when he contends that civilization is born of the struggle for unity, universality, and ecumenism alone. Civilization does not spring forth from concord and commonality. . . . Rather, civilization develops from the tension between internationalism and particularism, and it flourishes only when the latter is legitimated within a framework that can be applied to all peoples, such as the modern territorial nation-state. After all, there is another common feature to the Roman empire, medieval Christendom, Nazism, and Communism which Mr. Glynn overlooks—their anti-Semitism. And this feature of Western history may be explained by the fact that the Jews are the most particular of all people who must first disappear in order for humanity to unite into a single world order.

ABRAHAM BERKOWITZ
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Reading Patrick Glynn's "The Age of Balkanization" reminds me of a memorandum I wrote seventeen years ago on the coming era of ethnic conflict in the world. I was working at the Ford Foundation in those days, and this largest of the world's philanthropic institutions was allocating tens of millions of dollars a year to the development of third-world societies.

The memo, dated October 5, 1976, and addressed to the then-president of the Ford Foundation, McGeorge Bundy, has come back to mind with rising insistence these past few years. As ethnic battling mounts in Bosnia, the Caucasus, several African countries, India, and many other parts of the world, rereading that 1976 memo sheds some light on causes and possible courses of action.

Here are excerpts:

> There is no letup in the sharpening of tensions and open conflicts between ethnic groups all over the world. In Europe, Northern Ireland is the cruelest case, but there are also serious tensions and some bloodletting in Spain and Belgium. In Africa, we have witnessed particularly cruel developments in Nigeria, Burundi, and Uganda. . . . In Asia (e.g. Malaysia), there are recurrent efforts to press on Chinese minorities. And Lebanon's suffering speaks for itself.
>
> In all these cases, an issue appears to be present that has not received much attention and on which there is . . . a good deal of confusion. It is the convergence of class with race or ethnic background or religion.
>
> To illustrate: many Christians in America see the struggle in Lebanon as a social conflict in which a majority, who happen to be Muslims, seeks to get a larger share of the pie of which a minority, who happen to be Christians, has an inordinately large portion.
>
> While the social side of the conflict certainly deserves full and fair consideration, the question is whether one can in its name view as secondary the ethnic or racial side. For in a civil war among ethnic, racial, and religious groups, the vic-

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tory of the majority is virtually certain if there is no intervention, and the bloodbath may drown and render irrelevant the resolution of social inequities. . . .

Clearly, there is a difference between countries where minorities have reached "disproportionate" shares of economic and social power on the basis of their own efforts and skills, and those societies where suppression of a majority by a minority is official government policy (South Africa). Yet even in the latter situation, policies to right a deep moral wrong should seek not only to prevent violence against the hitherto ruling minority, but to preserve . . . resources and skills that the emerging majority-ruled society is bound to need badly.

In sum, it seems to me that the current tendency to see "proportionalism" as the governing objective, and to be unaware of or insufficiently concerned with the new (or old?) kinds of injustice that inhere in such a simplistic approach to social policy is terribly dangerous.

The memorandum then proposed an institution in the third world, where most of Ford's international allocations were being applied, to support "a small center . . . to pursue research and responsible public discussion of the subject."

This center was established in 1981, five years later, after a wearying policy-and-bureaucratic process. It became the International Center for Ethnic Studies (ICES) in Sri Lanka, governed and operating to this day under its mixed Sinhalese/Tamil leadership team. Its advice is now being sought not only within Sri Lanka, South and Southeast Asia, but also by Russia, Canada, and other areas where ethnic conflict is active or threatens.

The most important lesson I drew from the experience was that the top people at Ford just could not warm to the idea the memo had proposed, approving it only after dogged persistence by a small band of concerned program officers. They were "excited" (a word that always depicted the mood of the giver rather than the receiver of grants) by white/nonwhite conflicts within the U.S. and abroad (South Africa). They could identify with issues in which whites like them were involved and where they could try to absolve themselves of their inherited guilt.

When it came to the equally dangerous, often far bloodier, wars among nonwhites (Hutus and Tutsis in Burundi; vast conflicts in eastern India, etc.), with tens of thousands of victims, there was no "excitement." To this day, when ethnic conflict is the stuff of banner headlines, our foundations and many other nonprofit institutions still have not faced up to the issue with the resources and the priority it merits. . . .

Had we been only a fraction as assiduous in our intervention in the emerging ethnic conflicts in Europe following the collapse of the Soviet Union as we have been for more than a decade in South Africa, we might have been more helpful in Yugoslavia, Georgia, and elsewhere. . . . .

ROBERT B. GOLDMANN
Washington, D.C.

PATRICK GLYNN writes:

"The Age of Balkanization" was not primarily about the situation in the former Yugoslavia but was indeed inspired by it, and was written after a two-year period during which, somewhat to my surprise, the Yugoslavian crisis and war gradually became my main preoccupation as a foreign-policy analyst. During that time—which included a visit to the Croatian war zones in December 1991—I have followed events in the region daily, written and commented extensively on the war, met and talked at length with regional and Western officials involved in the situation, and learned more about the history of Yugoslavia than most people would care to know. So the judgments that I offer about Yugoslavia in the article, though necessarily brief, are not, as Mark B. Lapping suggests, "superficial."

The ins and outs of the Yugoslavia problem are notoriously difficult to explain, and I won't bore readers with all of them here. Suffice it to say that before one forms a judgment, it is useful to master at least the basic facts of the situation, which Mr. Lapping has evidently failed to do. His notion that Germany inspired this war is nonsense. The German recognition of Slovenia and Croatia was not "almost immediate," but came nearly six months after Serbia attacked its two neighbors. It coincided with—and probably contributed to—the (albeit temporary) end of the war in Croatia. I said then, and continue to believe today, that if the German and EC recognition—the first real "punishment" Belgrade received for its aggression—had been followed up by a concerted Western policy to contain and deter Serbia from further depredations, the subsequent war against Bosnia, with all its horrors, might have been averted. Instead, Washington dithered, and the appalling results are there for all to see.

I cannot imagine why Mr. Lapping, evidently no expert on the Balkans, puts forward an utterly unfounded picture of external "dynastic impulses" struggling to tear Yugoslavia apart, except perhaps to justify his apparently strong support for "multiculturalism" and—could it be?—to rewrite history to fit the peculiar anti-authoritarian imperatives of that doctrine.

Alex N. Dragnich's position is more informed and more understandable, given his Serbian perspective, but still unsustainable in the face of the facts. As the CIA itself pointed out as early as fall 1990, and as the vast majority of analysts familiar with this situation agree, the break-up of Yugoslavia was driven from the start by the virulent and violence-prone nationalism of Slobodan Milosevic's dictatorial regime in Belgrade. To be sure, the turn toward democracy in Slovenia and (more certainly) in Croatia did coincide with a reemergence of nationalism in those two republics, but in both cases national feeling was tempered by an aspiration to democracy and a desire for a modern European identity. Even Croatia's Franjo Tudjman, no paragon of tolerance, opened Croatia to Western human-rights monitors in the early 1990's (in sharp contrast to Milosevic's policy in Kosovo) and yielded to Western pressure for measures to reassure Croatia's alienated Serb minority. His efforts were subverted by Belgrade's deliberate program—involving weapons transfers and intense propaganda—to incite Croatia's Serbian minority to violence. Since the late 1980's, Serbia has either persecuted or made war on every other national group in Yugoslavia—Albanians in Kosovo, Hungarians in Vojvodina, Slovenes, Croats, and now Bosnian Muslims. Milosevic drove secessionist forces in the other republics in the late 1980's and early 1990's by deliberately subverting constitutional arrangements designed to protect the rights of all republics within the

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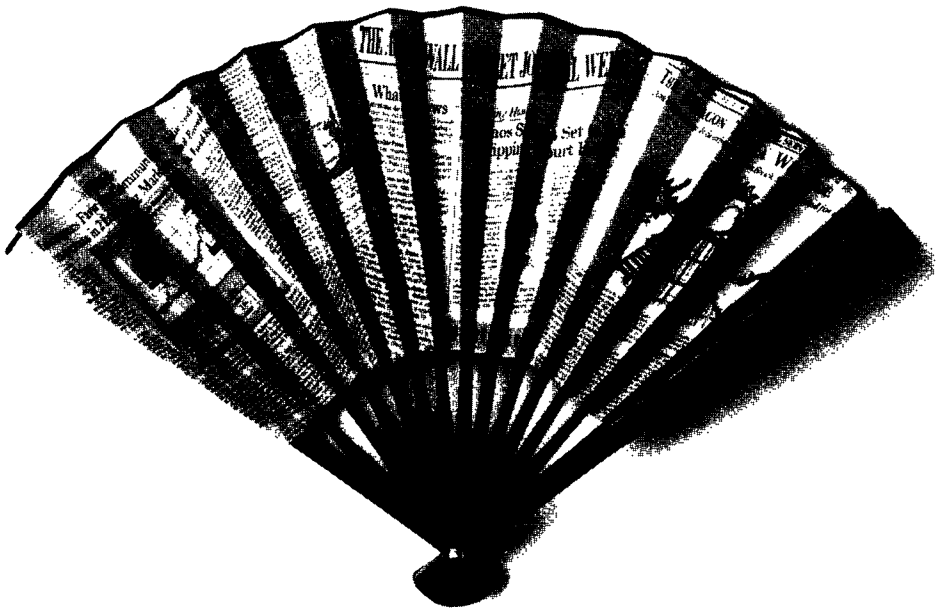

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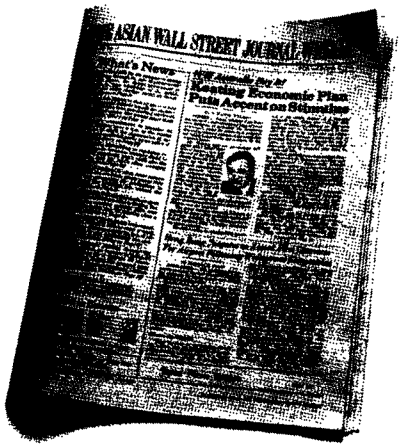

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federation, acting in the name of a nominal "Yugoslavianism" that everybody understood to be angry Serbian nationalism in thin disguise. There is every reason to suppose that, within the context of a transition to democracy, Yugoslavia's ethnic problems could have been solved by negotiation and the democratic process, especially with more intelligent Western help. Milosevic, a Communist-turned-fascist dictator, had no intention of letting this happen. One of the depressing aspects of this situation is the relatively small number of Serbian intellectuals who have been willing to condemn Milosevic's policies unconditionally—as, for example, I, as an Irish-American, would unhesitatingly condemn the IRA. They have not even said anything against the "ethnic cleansing" in Bosnia, where Serbs enjoyed an atmosphere of nearly perfect tolerance before many of them, under Milosevic's diabolical guidance, began to turn violently on their Muslim and Croatian neighbors next door. Some tensions were to be expected in post-cold-war Yugoslavia, but thanks mainly to Milosevic, it has become the war of every man against every man.

Abraham Berkowitz, who has obviously also been reflecting on the Balkanization phenomenon, offers a thoughtful qualification to my argument, concerning the importance of the nation-state, even if I think he may go too far. I agree with him (and, for that matter, with Margaret Thatcher) that the "universalism" of, for example, the EC could itself pose a danger, by unnaturally denying and eroding national authority. As Thatcher has pointed out, it is nations, and not international organizations like the EC or the UN, that are built to resist tyranny. But one does not have to go too far back into history to find nation-states themselves causing mischief—think of World War I. The key, as Mr. Berkowitz himself seems to suggest, is to find the right balance between strong nations and supranational principles such as those embodied in the UN charter. The Clinton administration's multilateralism, like the Maastricht treaty on European unity, goes too far toward weak universalism. The old concept of the "free world" was probably the best balance, but that, as I noted, was dependent upon the presence of an enemy, and we will have difficulty replicating such an arrangement in the present environment.

Robert B. Goldmann's letter shows that ethnic tensions have been around for a long time. The question is whether, owing to tectonic shifts in the international landscape, they now take on a new, if not yet entirely clear, significance. I continue to believe that they do.

Shultz & Reagan

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

George Weigel's "Shultz, Reagan, and the Revisionists" [Observations, August] is little more than a tired reprise of the conservative litany which chants that Ronald Reagan's "visionary leadership . . . was the *sine qua non*" for winning the cold war. . . . In contrast is the conclusion of a recent study titled *American-Soviet Relations*, by Peter G. Boyle:

> Reagan's policies toward the Soviet Union in his first term have justifiably been heavily criticized on many counts. Reagan had scant knowledge of foreign policy and his ignorance of basic details was at times alarming. His harshly anti-Soviet speeches were needlessly provocative and helped to create the unhealthy mood of panic and fear in the early 1980's.

. . . Mr. Weigel is, no doubt, aware that George F. Kennan has written that "the suggestion that any United States administration had the power to influence decisively the course of a tremendous domestic upheaval in another great country on another side of the globe is simply childish." This nugget of wisdom provides the proper context for assessing President Reagan's "contributions."

Mr. Weigel states that Secretary of State George Shultz was of the opinion that "no significant progress could have been made with the Soviet Union so long as the Leninist gerontocrats of the Brezhnev/Andropov/Chernenko/Gromyko generation remained at the throttle in Moscow." While that view appears to be absolutely correct as far as it goes (and hints at the prescience of Jerry Hough's 1980 book, *Soviet Leadership in Transition*), it ignores the role which Reagan's hard line played in stiffening Soviet resolve (e.g., . . . Brezhnev's speech of October 27, 1982 to his senior military leaders; the downing of Korean Air Lines flight 007; the Soviet delegation walking out of the Geneva INF negotiations in December 1983). . . .

For the pre-Gorbachev period of Reagan's presidency, then, if not for the entire cold war in general, there appears to be some merit to Kennan's conclusion that "the general effect of cold-war extremism was to delay rather than hasten the great change that overtook the Soviet Union at the end of the 1980's."

Alas, Mr. Weigel also is far from correct in assessing the Gorbachev/Shevardnadze leadership. The new leaders brought substantially more than a mere "change in style." . . . Gorbachev broke the back of the ever-increasing militarization of relations between the cold warriors . . . by proposing "reasonable sufficiency" as early as 1985, and by reinserting a civilian voice into the military-technical component of Soviet military doctrine (something unheard of since Nikita Khrushchev) as a prelude to the unilateral and asymmetrical cuts in weapons which demonstrated, in part, the Soviet "shift" to "mutual security." . . .

Compare that with the reckless defense spending (in 1981, $171 billion; by 1986, $376 billion); reckless rhetoric (a nuclear shot across the bow); and reckless disregard for the law (the Boland amendment, Iran-*contra*), which characterized the behavior of Reagan and many of his subordinate ideologues. Until Gorbachev came to power, however, this reckless behavior only heightened tensions. Who, then, brought change to the Soviet Union and the world? Reagan or Gorbachev?

Asked to assess the impact of Reagan's defense spending and rhetoric upon the new leadership, Aleksandr Yakovlev responded in the *New Yorker* (November 2, 1992) that

> it played no role. None. . . . Gorbachev and I were ready for changes in our policy regardless of whether the American President was Reagan, or Kennedy, or someone even more liberal. It was clear that our military spending was enormous and we had to reduce it. . . . There have been better and smarter Presidents. I can't say that Reagan played a major role. . . .

President Reagan's election and reckless behavior satisfied the need of a large constituency in

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America to demonstrate that it was still "Morning in America"—Vietnam, Watergate, the oil crisis, Eurocommunism, the Ayatollah Khomeini (and hostages), and Soviet assertiveness under détente notwithstanding. COMMENTARY was influential in both arousing and articulating that need. But, as Peter Boyle has written,

> détente was the victim of pent-up forces within American society in the 1970's which had little direct relation to the Soviet Union but which produced an emotional outburst against Soviet perfidy [in Afghanistan] as a catharsis for the *complex assortment of difficulties* which America experienced in the 1970's.

Given these "pent-up forces," one might be sympathetic to those, such as Mr. Weigel, who now must credit Reagan's efforts for Gorbachev's "decisive" results. It does not, however, render such confusion any less childish.

WALTER C. UHLER
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

George Shultz as Secretary of State was a stalwart gray bureaucrat who neither sparked the public's interest (can anyone remember any noteworthy quote?) nor represented the public interest. His department constantly fought, rather than encouraged, the Reaganite vision and Reagan's appointees in its ranks.

Probably the best measure of a public figure is what he considers important enough to resign over. In the case of Shultz, none of his *causes célèbres* reflected ideology or policy matters, but were, rather, burning issues of bureaucratic entrenchment.

The Iran-*contra* hearings provided the forum for Shultz to elaborate about the three times he had submitted resignations to President Reagan. The first one concerned the refusal of the White House travel office to allow him to use White House airplanes for his travel. . . .

The second issue over which Shultz went to the mat was the ability of U.S. ambassadors to speak directly with the President. This came up when a U.S. ambassador to a Middle East country had the temerity to communicate directly with the White House when the White House requested direct advice. Most Americans have the notion that the President is able to appoint as ambassadors whomever he has confidence in to carry out his foreign policy around the world. However, Shultz insisted on the bureaucratic dictum that the President may not speak or consult directly with any ambassador, and that all communications in either direction must go through the Secretary of State. This certainly leaves the President in the awkward situation of not being privy to the candid opinions of his ambassadors in the most sensitive negotiations.

Moreover, rather than boosting Reaganite appointees, Shultz supported the formula that the President could appoint candidates for only about one-third of the available ambassadorial positions. For the remaining two-thirds, the candidates had to come from the . . . career Foreign Service. This bureaucratic turf warfare against Reagan's political appointees in Shultz's department became so intense that Shultz even refused to make public the list of positions available for political (noncareer) appointment. . . .

Shultz's third and most famous offer to resign was over using lie-detector tests for security investigations. In a memorable pouting scene on TV, Shultz informed the nation that if his people were subject to lie-detector tests, he would resign. He felt very strongly about this, even though all the other members of the cabinet agreed on the need for lie-detector measures. . . .

Finally, like the typical bureaucrat, when he left office Shultz went to work for special interests which the Department of State represented long and hard in foreign-policy dealings. Noteworthy has been his becoming director of the Chevron Corporation, which somehow got the inside track for lucrative multibillion-dollar oil concessions in the former Soviet Union. Coincidence, I'm sure.

The Reagan Doctrine of supporting freedom fighters around the world and overpowering the evil Soviet empire succeeded around George Shultz. I think most Americans wished that the Secretary of State had gotten on the bandwagon and embraced it more enthusiastically, vocally, and morally.

CARL OLSON
State Department Watch
Washington, D.C.

GEORGE WEIGEL writes:

I cannot agree with Carl Olson that George Shultz "constantly fought . . . the Reaganite vision. . . ." This was, after all, the Secretary of State who staunchly backed Elliott Abrams and Richard Schifter in their admirable and vigorous conduct of what was the key ideological position during the end-game of the cold war, the Assistant Secretaryship for Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs. As I wrote in my discussion of Mr. Shultz's memoir, the Secretary was less naturally inclined to rhetorical assertiveness than others of his colleagues. But rather than constituting an indictment of his entire stewardship of the Department of State, this seems to me to raise the interesting question of the good-cop/tough-cop dynamics of Reagan-administration diplomacy vis-à-vis the evil empire.

As for Walter Uhler—well, I fear that Mr. Uhler just doesn't get it. Neither, on the matters under discussion, does George F. Kennan. Mr. Uhler may be assured that I am indeed aware of Kennan's October 28, 1992 op-ed piece in the *New York Times*. But Mr. Uhler himself seems blithely unaware of the self-contradictions in that piece, in which the same Kennan who proclaims as "childish" the notion that U.S. policy influenced Soviet actions in the 1980's decries the "extreme militarization of American discussion and policy" in the 1950's which, according to Kennan, caused the Soviets to "tighten the controls by both party and police." You can't have it both ways, it would seem to me. (On a related point: expecting Aleksandr Yakovlev to give Ronald Reagan credit for the collapse of Yakovlev's dreams of reform Communism is something like expecting Field Marshal Jodl to have congratulated Eisenhower on the planning and execution of the Normandy invasion.)

Like others of his ideological persuasion, Mr. Uhler is given to the unhappy practice of euphemism in the service of extenuation: thus the murder of innocents on KAL 007 is described as an example of "stiffening Soviet resolve." And as for the Soviets' "unilateral and asymmetrical cuts in weapons," perhaps Mr. Uhler will wish to consult the recently released figures on Soviet nuclear capability, which indicate a mass of weaponry beyond that imagined by

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the hawkish Western analysts of the 1980's.

Finally, may I say, even at the risk of harshness, that anyone who finds Professor Jerry Hough "prescient" is doubtless waiting expectantly for the next appearance of the Easter Bunny.

Holocaust Museums

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY

Edward Norden's article, "Yes and No to the Holocaust Museums" [August], is fair and sensitive. I was fortunate to have visited the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C., the day it opened, before any media hype could influence me. I saw it at the same time as Bill Clinton, Lech Walesa of Poland, Chaim Herzog of Israel, and a dozen other world leaders. I can tell you that they went through the museum in a sober and somber manner. The architecture, the exhibits, and the sheer professionalism of the place are all deeply impressive. This museum is a testament to the survivors and the professional staff that built it. . . . On my visit, I followed a Mormon family consisting of a father, mother, and six children, and they went through the museum with respect and awe. This is a museum for all Americans: it is not a Jewish museum, it is an *American* museum, fulfilling America's highest aspirations and ideals. And I say this as a child of survivors, who lost 25 members of my family, including my two precious little sisters, to Ukrainian policemen and SS *Einsatzgruppen*. On this issue Henry Kissinger is wrong. The Holocaust Memorial Museum will not reignite anti-Semitism; . . . in fact, it will reduce anti-Semitism by educating the world, and not *just* Americans, to be more tolerant of differences. In short, in the words of the time-honored joke—this museum is *good* for the Jews!

JACK NUSAN PORTER
Newton Highlands, Massachusetts

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Thank you for Edward Norden's article, which dealt, in part, with the newly opened U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum. I was glad to see Mr. Norden's rather favorable review of this museum, but think that his mark of "B+" is too low for so vast an exhibit of the anti-Semitic inhumanity epitomized by the Holocaust. . . . The museum traces chronologically the early acts of the Nazis such as the burning of the Reichstag, *Kristallnacht*, etc., and then proceeds to the Warsaw Ghetto, forced labor, and the systematic murder of the Jews. What is particularly welcome is the documentation (narrative and pictorial) of the Nazi accomplices among the Croats, Estonians, and Ukrainians. The recounting of the gruesome indecencies perpetrated specifically against women is particularly shocking. What also stands out in my mind is the frankness with which the museum deals with the fact that the U.S. could have curbed the number of dead innocents but did not; I am thinking particularly of the photograph in which the crematoria are visible that was taken by U.S. bombers who destroyed oil refineries within several miles of Auschwitz but left the crematoria and rail lines leading into the death camp untouched.

I think that this memorial will help educate those Americans who are sadly ignorant of these facts, and will help to refute the lies of the Holocaust deniers. Seeing this exhibit made me, an immigrant from the former Soviet Union, even more proud to be a U.S. citizen. . . .

ALEXANDER V. TSESIS
Chicago, Illinois

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Edward Norden deserves commendation for his profound analysis of the Holocaust museums in the U.S. and how they may affect the future of the Jewish community. He generously praises the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C., especially when compared with Beit Hashoah (the Museum of Tolerance) in Los Angeles—a museum that was labeled "grotesque" by the *New Republic*. . . .

I am grateful to Mr. Norden for reporting on a little-known event sponsored by Beit Hashoah, namely, the showing of a "powerful" film on Bosnian Muslims terrorized by Serbs. At a reception that followed, the film's producer, Arthur Kent, was quoted as saying that the tragedy in Bosnia is "an insult to the memory of those who died in the Holocaust." (How does he know? Did he ask those who died?) . . . Kent's preposterous statement is indicative of a widespread phenomenon in the Jewish community of misusing the Nazi Holocaust as a metaphor for the tragedy in the Balkans. This comparison is not only improper but clearly misleading, and it negates the purpose of the newly-built museums of presenting the Holocaust as a uniquely Jewish event in history.

The circumstances of the ethnic fighting in the disintegrated Yugoslavia are fundamentally different from the systematic extermination of the Jewish people by Nazi Germany. What we have in Bosnia and Croatia is a civil war among *combatants* using the most cruel means of warfare that are a legacy of the region's history. . . .

As a Holocaust survivor, I am very much concerned about a new common agenda adopted recently by leaders of major American Jewish organizations, namely, a forceful campaign for our government to intervene in the Balkan civil war. . . . These organizations . . . have the word "Jewish" in their names. Some of them are defense organizations, others have an outstanding tradition of charitable activities in Jewish communities here and abroad. Yet the new focus is on non-Jewish issues. Have their charters been amended to universalize their work? Do they mean to say that all Jewish problems in America have been solved? Are the problems facing Jews in the former Soviet Union no longer important? How did our leadership get its mandate to embark on a new agenda? . . .

ALFRED LIPSON
Bayside, New York

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Edward Norden heard the same *MacNeil-Lehrer News Hour* that I did, that of December 3, 1992. The "black-activist" guest he mentions was Congresswoman Barbara-Rose Collins (D.-Mich.). She appeared with two Senators, all discussing the food crisis in Somalia and the lawlessness of native thugs. It was not enough, she said, for the U.S. to deliver food and medical supplies to the Somali population. No indeed, that was only part of what was needed. She favored U.S. military intervention. As Mr. Norden writes, she stated that the reason the U.S. entered World War II was to save the Jews of Europe. . . . I was stunned by her outrageous ignorance of history. There was no correction by any participant, including Jim Lehrer. . . .

EUGENE W. FELDMAN
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Sartre's Grandchildren

To the Editor of Commentary:

Hilton Kramer's deft analysis of the mendacity of Jean-Paul Sartre and his cohorts ["The Flowers on Sartre's Grave," July] is necessary because, as Mr. Kramer points out, the legacy of Sartre will "continue to poison the intellectual atmosphere."

As far as I know, the only authorized biographer of Sartre is John Gerassi, professor of political science at the City University of New York and author of *Jean-Paul Sartre: Hated Conscience of His Century*. In his book, Gerassi, a proud disciple of Sartre, recounts Sartre's reaction to the 1972 Lod airport massacre in which sixteen Puerto Rican tourists (some of them nuns) and twelve Israeli civilians were murdered by Japanese terrorists. "Though [Sartre] lamented the death of various American nuns who were caught by the Japanese machine guns, [he] saw this act of terrorism as an example of international cooperation among leftists."

Exhibiting a bizarre moral sensitivity, Gerassi says he suggested to Sartre that the Japanese had erred because some of the murdered Israelis may have been supporters of the Israeli peace movement (apparently, in Gerassi's view, it was politically correct to murder Israelis who were *not* members of the peace movement). But even this was too much for his hero: "Sartre was furious. How could he possibly work with someone who didn't understand what internationalism was all about, he shouted."

Yes, the perils to civilized life posed by the puerilities of self-proclaimed great intellectuals have receded with the fall of Communism. But the teachings of Sartre will not die easily. In his book, Gerassi brags about the criminal charges brought against him in the 1960's, while he was a lecturer at San Francisco State University, for participating in a "seizure" of the university by radicals and black separatists. He expresses gratitude for the support given him . . . by "eight of my very best students, today all successful teachers and writers."

Thus we can assume that, by virtue of the tyranny of tenure, a large number of Sartre's intellectual grandchildren are alive and well, attempting to instill political correctness through their teaching and sloganeering. Those professors and their students should be required to read Hilton Kramer's essay.

Joel J. Sprayregen
Chicago, Illinois

Hebrew in America

To the Editor of Commentary:

"Hebrew in America" by Alan Mintz [July] is very timely because it reminds the English-speaking Jewish public of the importance and centrality of Hebrew in preserving Jewish identity. . . .

The 1990 census of the Jewish population has left the Jewish public, and especially the Jewish establishment, suffering from battle shock. . . . The census conveys numerically what has been clear for years to political insiders who know that the political power of American Jewry is declining due to demographic factors. . . . Assimilation and intermarriage have been recognized as the major factors responsible for the weakening of the Jewish community. The decline has become so serious that the 1992 Conference of Jewish Federations was devoted to the threat to Jewish continuity. Mr. Mintz's article serves as a reminder, one of many, that there can be no ethnic identity without cultural identification, and no cultural identification without the language of the ethnic group, in this case, Hebrew. Scholars of intellectual history have already established the connection. To take one example: the cultural contributions of the affluent Jewish community of Alexandria, with Philo at its head, disappeared fairly quickly because they were made in Greek. . . . The same phenomenon was seen in Germany; the Jewish Enlightenment that conducted itself in German was unable to hold its own against the surrounding culture. . . . By contrast, the Hebrew Enlightenment in Germany spread to surrounding countries and enriched the Jewish experience.

Two major inaccuracies in Mr. Mintz's article must be addressed.

1. He bases his argument for the centrality of Hebrew on the position of Ahad Ha-Am. But the recognition of the centrality of Hebrew in the Jewish cultural milieu in the modern era preceded Ahad Ha-Am by some 150 years. Already in the middle of the 18th century the Hebrew Enlightenment accorded Hebrew a central position. Evidence for this is to be found in the first Hebrew-language periodical, *Kohelet Mussar*, edited by Moses Mendelsohn, which contained articles decrying the neglect of Hebrew at the time. From Mendelsohn to Ahad Ha-Am, Hebrew was increasingly recognized as the cornerstone of Jewish national culture. Ahad Ha-Am is only one in a line of Hebraists who toiled for Hebrew to take root and grow. In fact, Mr. Mintz's reliance on the pronouncements of Ahad Ha-Am actually weakens his argument about the centrality of Hebrew in Jewish life, for the implication of Ahad Ha-Am's belief that Hebrew could preserve the link with Jewish history is that only those concerned with the past need to learn Hebrew, and that those who wished to sever Jewry from its religious past could set Hebrew aside. . . .

Ahad Ha-Am's opponents, the "young ones"—M.I. Berdichevsky and particularly I.H. Brenner—clashed violently with Ahad Ha-Am's world view and argued that Hebrew has a self-evident existence. For example, the protagonist of Brenner's *Misaviv LaNekuda* champions Hebrew, despite the fact that few spoke it at the time, . . . and rejects Russian, even though it was the language of the revolutionary intelligentsia and thus the language of the future. In other writings Brenner also argued in favor of Hebrew as the obvious cornerstone of national existence.

Only small extremist groups . . . rejected Hebrew. . . . While religion and even the Bible were areas of conflict among national religious groups and socialists, there was agreement with regard to Hebrew. . . .

2. Mr. Mintz's article is particularly lacking in practical suggestions for countering the decline of Hebrew in the United States. He writes, quite correctly, of the effort wasted in translating and says the Jewish community must return to the real thing—Hebrew. There is no question that if even a small part of the effort invested in translation were invested in the study and propagation of Hebrew, the state of Hebrew here in America would be greatly improved. But Mr. Mintz does not give any suggestions even in general terms for improving the situation.

Who can revive Hebrew? De-

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spite the fact that Jewish afternoon schools have disappeared, together with their Hebrew teachers, as Mr. Mintz points out, it is clear that any Hebrew revival on this continent can occur only within the framework of Hebrew day schools. . . . Is a rebirth of Hebrew which does not flow from the educational system even conceivable? . . . Without a vibrant system of Jewish education, Hebrew will survive in the United States only in museums and archives. . . .

In spite of my criticisms, I believe Mr. Mintz is to be commended for joining the line of people who have called on the Jewish establishment to recognize the centrality of Hebrew in Jewish life and support those organizations and institutions which advance Hebrew and Jewish identity.

SAMUEL SCHNEIDER
Department of Hebrew Language and Literature
Yeshiva University
New York City

ALAN MINTZ writes:

I welcome Samuel Schneider's seconding of my call for the American Jewish community to deepen its engagement with Hebrew; I further join him in wondering why the community's leadership, newly agitated by alarming statistics about intermarriage and the abandonment of Jewish identity, still fails to understand the necessary link between Jewish continuity and knowledge of Hebrew. The fault is not entirely one-sided, however. While I identify with the Hebrew camp and its indignation, it must be admitted that advocates for Hebrew have not been particularly successful in making their arguments persuasive and finding ways to demonstrate to Jews ignorant of Hebrew why knowledge of the language makes a difference. It is an enormous challenge, and it is one that we have not sufficiently set ourselves to.

For the centrality of Ahad Ha-Am I make no apologies. It goes without saying that any fuller discussion of modern attitudes toward Hebrew would describe the reverence for the language on the part of Enlightenment writers in the century that preceded Ahad Ha-Am, as well as the contending rationales for Hebrew during his lifetime. I invoked historical matters only as a background to a discussion of the American scene, and it is clear that on these shores it was Ahad Ha-Am who was the great influence. After all, unlike Brenner, Ahad Ha-Am had a theory of cultural practice in the Diaspora. His influence extended beyond the Hebraist camp to Mordecai Kaplan and Samson Benderly and much of Jewish education.

Finding "practical suggestions for countering the decline of Hebrew" is unquestionably an imperative goal, but the pages of a journal of general opinion like COMMENTARY are not the place to take up such matters. Within the councils of policy-planners and educators, it is time for these discussions to begin anew.

Hill-Thomas

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . In "The Case Against Anita Hill" [August], Terry Eastland points to the true significance of the Hill-Thomas matter. A law professor sought to kill a nomination to the Supreme Court without allowing the nominee the right to confront his accuser. How can the most rabid partisan of Anita Hill overcome the assault to civil liberties that the Hill charges represented? How can the most rabid Hill partisan overcome the conclusion that the Hill witnesses offered nothing more substantial than vague hearsay testimony that would not have been permitted in a court of law? . . .

Clarence Thomas, in a letter in the April 1987 issue of COMMENTARY, recognized that he was among those blacks "who have differed from the line laid down by the civil-rights establishment." This "establishment," he wrote, "has encouraged black Americans to act and to be perceived as another interest group. . . ." Thomas continued: "When self-proclaimed black leaders reduce differences with their political, social, and economic agenda to an attack on fundamental rights, they trivialize the very rights they claim to be defending." And he added: "A nation that is not based on race, that takes its bearings by standards that transcend race and apply to all humanity, is what our fundamental ideals demand."

In that letter, Thomas indicated his fidelity to the traditional liberalism that respected, nay fought for, civil liberties and civil rights to enhance individual dignity, that demanded "formal governing procedures" to make the individual secure against abuse of power by the ruling class . . . .

DAVID R. ZUKERMAN
Bronx, New York

American Jewish History

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

It is surprising that Robert M. Seltzer, in his discussion of recent books on American Jewish history ["New Looks at American Jewish History," August], neglects to include *Jewish-American History: An Encyclopedia*, edited by Jack Fischel and Sanford Pinsker (Garland, 1992). This reference survey of the Jewish experience in America has received unanimous praise from reviewers and was selected by the Association of Jewish Libraries as the best reference book of 1992. It is not my intention to diminish the importance of Howard Sachar's *A History of the Jews in America* or the five-volume *The Jewish People in America*, sponsored by the American Jewish Historical Society, which Mr. Seltzer does discuss, but to make the point that an article that purports to summarize the current literature on the American Jewish experience has failed to include an equally important work. The result is that the reader comes away with an incomplete awareness of the current literature on the subject. . . .

JACK FISCHEL
Millersville University
Millersville, Pennsylvania

AIDS & HIV

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

There is a seriously misleading misprint in my letter in the October issue responding to Michael Fumento's review of Robert S. Root-Bernstein's book, *Rethinking Aids* [Books in Review, July]. The original letter said that 5 percent of the chickens infected with the leukosis virus developed the disease, but this was printed as 50 percent, which gives a totally false picture of the pathogenicity of the disease. The overwhelming majority of chickens, infected early in life with this virus of the same class as HIV, develop no symptoms of the disease. A similar situation might exist for normal heterosexuals infected with HIV.

A minor misprint occurs in the first paragraph: my letter stated the annual AIDS incidence as 2-3 percent among HIV-infected indi-

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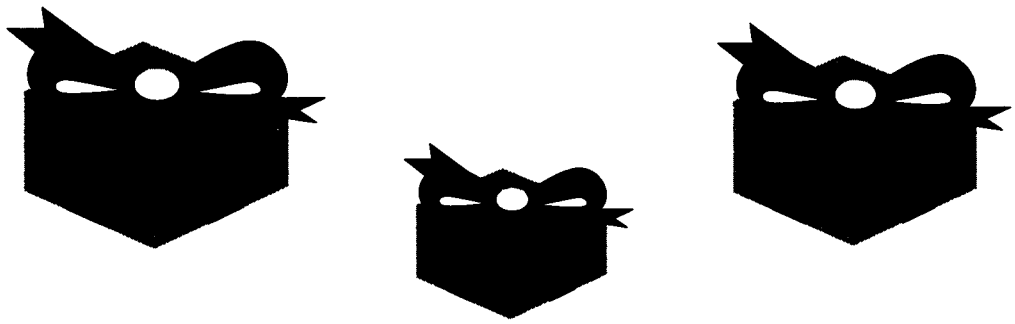

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viduals, but it appeared as 2.3 percent. There is a more substantive problem here than a minor misprint. The government has been temporizing with the estimates of the size of the HIV-infected population, at least since 1987, with a tendency to decrease the numbers, presumably because the incidence of clinically recognizable AIDS cases did not agree with stated figures for the lag time to development of the disease. This lag-time estimate increased from five years in the early days to ten years more recently.

A trend in the opposite direction has set in for the reported number of clinical AIDS cases, increasing from 30,000 to 47,000 this year after they had been reported nearly constant. The reason for this sudden upturn is not hard to find since several new disease categories, such as tuberculosis and cervical cancer, have been added to the AIDS list. This occurred under pressure from AIDS activists and other groups, after that reclassification had twice been rejected by expert panels.

The questionable logic of this action reminds me of a conversation I had with the U.S. Army's leading AIDS specialist in 1987. He told me he had seen eight cases of Kaposi's sarcoma in Army recruits, two of whom were diagnosed as AIDS. When I asked if there was a difference in symptoms that called for the distinction in diagnosis among cases, he said no, just that those classified as AIDS had antibodies to HIV. This was followed by a lecture that AIDS was no longer a "syndrome," which implies an unknown origin, but a "disease" which has a known cause, HIV in this case. With circular reasoning like that, is it any wonder that there is a strong association between AIDS and HIV?

An example of Mr. Fumento's tendency to make wild charges: he credits me with disputing the findings of the *Nature* article which purported to rule out a role for drugs in AIDS. In fact, I have never met or spoken with Tom Bethell, whose letter criticizing the *Nature* study, among other things, also appeared in the October COMMENTARY, nor had I seen or commented on the *Nature* article at the time that its flaws were discovered by someone else.

Mr. Fumento falls back on his *ad-hominem* attacks in labeling as cultists all who doubt an exclusive role of HIV in AIDS. I tried to make clear that neither Root-Bernstein nor I rule out a role for HIV, but we believe there are many factors that are not just accessories. We do not agree with my colleague, Peter Duesberg, that some role for HIV can be categorically ruled out, any more than it can be categorically ruled in. However, Duesberg does deserve credit for keeping the issue of causality alive for scientific discussion. Root-Bernstein's book deserves serious consideration for its exhaustive presentation of evidence, for keeping an open mind on the question of causality, and for emphasizing the multifactorial view. Mr. Fumento does a serious disservice to present and potential victims of the disease in labeling as cultists anyone who calls for a more objective consideration of the evidence.

HARRY RUBIN
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MICHAEL FUMENTO writes:

The first edition of my book, *The Myth of Heterosexual AIDS*, published in 1989, cites studies showing median infection-to-AIDS times of eight to eleven years. Thus, the lag-time estimate has held steady now for four years.

The new case definition of AIDS is certainly a political concoction, as Harry Rubin suggests, but it did not go into effect until 1993, and so cannot explain the figure of 47,000 AIDS cases which he cites and which, contrary to his impression, applies not to this year but to 1992. This year there will be around 100,000 cases of AIDS because of the new definition. It is rather alarming that Mr. Rubin does not know this, just as it is alarming that he thinks "the annual rate of clinical AIDS has been only about 30,000," as he said in his original letter.

This demonstrates the perils of a virologist venturing forth into epidemiological territory without the proper equipment. This is exactly the problem of Peter Duesberg and of Robert S. Root-Bernstein as well. They, too, have assumed the mantle of a scientific discipline in which they have no expertise and, indeed, of which Duesberg is contemptuous. In this respect, they can be compared to other scientists like Carl Sagan and Paul Ehrlich who may be experts in their own fields but pretend to be experts in other fields—with the result that they are consistently and often spectacularly wrong.

I stated in my earlier reply: "[Tom] Bethell does not tell us the names of the Berkeley researchers who disputed the findings of the *Nature* article, but Harry Rubin comes to mind." That was an assumption that, in light of Mr. Rubin's now referring to the study's "flaws," could hardly have been unwarranted. But, yes, Mr. Bethell should have named the researchers.

In my review I made clear why Root-Bernstein's thesis is essentially the same as Duesberg's. I also made clear why he and his cult followers are the ones doing a "serious disservice" by downplaying the importance of avoiding HIV infection.

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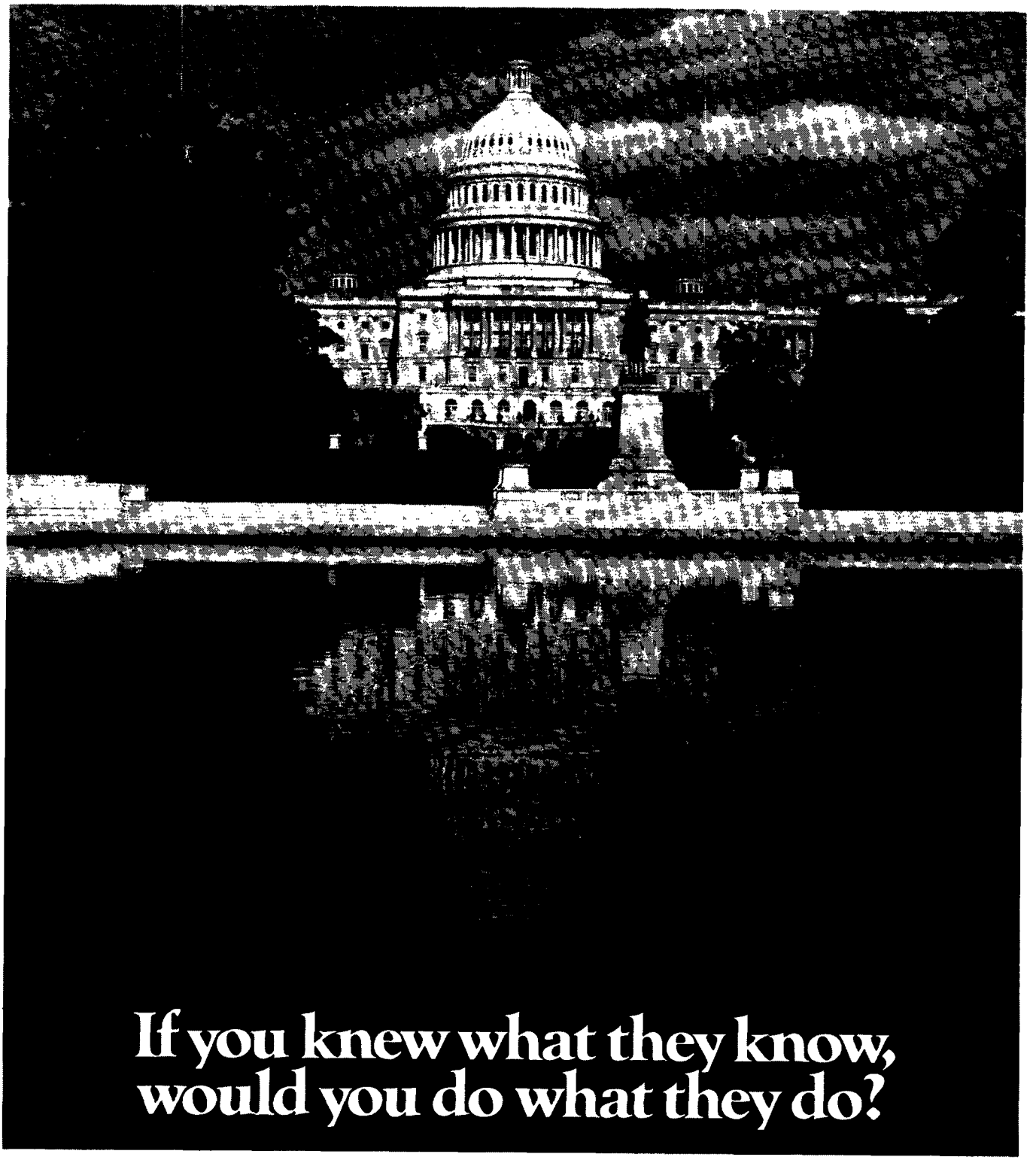

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Beyond Self-Defense

Joshua Muravchik

ON OCTOBER 3, a company of Army Rangers, the cream of America's fighting forces, was decimated in the streets of Mogadishu by what had been thought of as a ragtag group of thugs. When word reached home, a cry arose in Congress for withdrawal from Somalia. President Bill Clinton, forced to rely on help from the unlikely quarter of Senate Minority Leader Robert Dole, managed to get a six-month grace period for the extraction of American forces. But any plans previously contemplated by the administration for sending American troops to Haiti (to help reinstate the ousted President, Jean-Bertrand Aristide) or to Bosnia (to police a negotiated partition) were thrown into doubt.

Why did a mission that began so gloriously last December end in such ignominious retreat? And what lessons does it teach about sending American forces abroad in the post-cold-war world?

PRESIDENT George Bush's decision last November to dispatch an American division to help the UN pacify Somalia, so that relief might be brought to its starving inhabitants, came as a surprise. The hot debate in foreign policy at that moment was over intervention in Bosnia; virtually no one advocated going into Somalia. No less surprising were the reports that the then-Secretary of Defense, Dick Cheney, and the then-chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Colin Powell, both known for setting high thresholds for the use of force abroad, had strongly endorsed the Somalia mission.

Perhaps the President wanted to end his term with a heroic bow on the world stage. Perhaps all three men—who were united in their opposition to American action in Bosnia—wanted to demonstrate effectiveness on another front. Perhaps they welcomed the opportunity to cast the much-maligned U.S. military in the role of hero to Africans and Muslims abroad, and to blacks and liberals at home. Perhaps the motive was just what they said it was: purely humanitarian.

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In any event, Somalia was easy—or so it seemed. Bush's decision, said the *Washington Post*, arose from "a growing conviction that many thousands more people would starve to death within weeks in the absence of strong action," and from "a Pentagon calculation that the military risks would be minimal." At home, things certainly seemed easy, as Bush's initiative was widely hailed by members of both parties and (according to a Gallup poll) by 74 percent of the American public.

In Somalia, too, the American military deployment was well received. "Jubilant Somalis" watched U.S. Marines take up positions around Mogadishu, reported the *Post*, and they "cheered as the American helicopters crisscrossed the city sky." Somali warlords—the main instigators of the famine—rushed to embrace the arriving Americans, with Mohammed Farah Aidid, who had thwarted all previous UN relief efforts, leading the pack.

Back home, only a few skeptical voices made themselves heard, the most sonorous being that of Smith Hempstone, ambassador to Kenya, whose cabled alarum leaked into the newspapers. It will "be far easier to go in than get out," he warned. Bush responded to such warnings by emphasizing the narrow goal of the mission. His spokesman, Marlin Fitzwater, declared: "We want to make it clear that this UN force would be designed to get humanitarian supplies in, not to establish a new government or resolve the decades-long conflict there or to set up a protectorate or anything like that."

Fitzwater's reference to a "protectorate" may have been inspired by news reports that UN officials had talked among themselves about the idea of a trusteeship to end Somalia's murderous anarchy. This idea was soon dropped because its echoes of colonialism were anathema to various third-world governments. Even so, Security Council President André Erdös said that the UN might go so far as to assume the task of restoring "some kind of normalcy" to Somalia.

UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali also called on the American forces to disarm Somali factions, clear mines, train a police force, and restore order. But the Bush administration

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was not prepared for anything like such a role. The farthest it was willing to venture into internal Somali affairs was to encourage talks among various local leaders toward a political settlement.

All such efforts foundered, however, on the shoal of Mohammed Farah Aidid. Virtually from the moment the former Somali dictator, Mohammed Siad Barre, fell in 1991, Aidid (unlike other factional leaders) had opposed UN intervention to mediate conflict or provide relief. As the head of the strongest armed faction, Aidid aimed to rule Somalia. His adversaries had proved strong enough to deny him that goal—the essence of much of the warfare in Somalia—but neither could a settlement be reached without his cooperation.

While efforts toward such a settlement were unavailing, the feeding program was a huge success. Under the military umbrella, food flowed into the areas hard hit by famine. As one journalist, Jonathan Stevenson, wrote in *Foreign Policy*:

> By the end of December, the number of malnourished children under five in Mogadishu had returned to a near-normal 10 percent, compared to the more than 60 percent five months before. . . . The UN Food and Agricultural Organization is predicting 70 percent of normal agricultural production this year. The once-barren streets of Mogadishu are now packed, three stalls deep, with meat, grain, and bread sellers.

By the beginning of March, Robert Oakley, America's chief representative in Somalia, could report that "deaths from starvation are almost gone now."

When the Bush administration first announced its plans for Somalia, its spokesmen said that it intended to bring the troops back by the time of Clinton's inauguration (at which point they would be replaced by other forces under UN command). But since this was only six or seven weeks off, no one took the pledge very seriously. A few hundred soldiers were sent home by the deadline in a symbolic gesture of good faith, but on January 20, Clinton inherited the Somalia mission, and his administration seemed in no rush to end it.

Without that urgency, the United States fell in behind Secretary General Boutros-Ghali, who had a more ambitious agenda not only for Somalia, but for the UN itself, of which Somalia became a kind of test case. As he explained in an article in *Foreign Affairs*, the end of the cold war presented "an extraordinary opportunity to expand, adapt, and reinvigorate the work of the United Nations." Boutros-Ghali wanted the UN to go "beyond peacekeeping" to "peace enforcement" and other new activities, "some of them very intrusive." Some months later, when the Somalia mission began to falter, Under Secretary General for Political Affairs James O.C. Jonah said: "If we fail in Somalia, the repercussions will be devastating. It would show that the UN cannot sustain an operation, and that is why we want to see this effort succeed in Somalia."

Hence Boutros-Ghali and his staff moved slowly on replacing the American troops in Somalia and pressed to retain a large American contingent in the blue-helmeted UN force that began taking over in May. Boutros-Ghali wanted 8,000 Americans—half of the 16,000 who were still there—to remain on, under his command. In a bargain, he settled for 4,000 in exchange for U.S. support of a Security Council resolution that expanded the mission in Somalia to include "reestablishment of national and regional institutions and civil administration in the entire country."

In embracing this new mission, the State Department's coordinator for Somalia, David Shinn, explained that UN forces "basically are recreating a country. This has never been done before in the history of the world, at least the modern world." In August, when the death of four Americans shook American resolve on Somalia, Madeleine K. Albright, the U.S. ambassador to the UN, exhorted her countrymen to "stay the course and help lift the country and its people from the category of a failed state into that of an emerging democracy." And White House spokeswoman Dee Dee Myers declared: "We went in there with a clear vision of humanitarian relief and nation-building. They're still in that process."

Since October's debacle, the Clinton administration has pointed many accusatory fingers at the UN, and there is no doubt that Boutros-Ghali and company pulled America deeper into Somalia than it likely would have gone on its own. But Boutros-Ghali got his way because the Clinton administration had a weakness for what he was seeking to do.

Thus, in his September address to the UN General Assembly, Clinton proclaimed that "UN peacekeeping holds the promise to resolve many of this era's conflicts." Then, in a subsequent interview with the *Washington Post*, he expanded on this point:

> . . . There is a sense that we paid the price to win the cold war and paid the price to shoulder the burden of other countries and we ought to look inward now. . . .
>
> We have to resist it as we build a consensus for what our role in the world will be and how we will define it and how we will work with the United Nations and how we will develop the peacekeeping capacity of the United Nations, how we will define our interests.

He concluded the interview by reprising his preinaugural promise to "focus like a laser" on the domestic economy. "We've simply got to focus on rebuilding America."

Clinton, in other words, did not want America to turn its back on the world, but neither did he

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want to ask it to pay many prices or bear many burdens. Indeed, when the administration embraced "assertive multilateralism" as one of the pillars of its foreign policy, it apparently thought it had discovered a kind of poor man's internationalism. As the *Washington Post*'s Jim Hoagland observed: "Keeping the United Nations as a credible alternative to a Pax Americana is as important for Clinton's Office of Budget and Management as it is for the State Department."

Multilateralism was not only a poor man's internationalism; it was also, one might say, an isolationist's internationalism. Many liberals, like Clinton's old mentor, former Arkansas Senator J. William Fulbright, and many of those who made up Clinton's foreign-policy team, had long faced a dilemma. They welcomed international action but not the exertion of American power, which they believed, as Fulbright once so famously put it, was a great breeder of "arrogance." Far better for America to act multilaterally.

This sentiment was well captured in an essay by Robert Hunter, whom Clinton soon appointed ambassador to NATO. Hunter heralded the Somalia deployment because, in addition to its intrinsic merits, it "helps the United States to adjust to the post-cold-war world and to new methods of meeting likely challenges. . . . [W]e must be prepared to take part [in UN actions even] when we are less concerned. Otherwise, there can be no progress toward broadening the scope of the rule of law."

As things turned out, however, far from spurring "adjustment" to a new age of multilateralism, Somalia has rekindled old doubts about the UN and swelled the currents of isolationism. The *Wall Street Journal* reported that in reaction to Somalia and Haiti "Americans are turning inward again—this time, not because they are insulated from the world, but because they know too much about it."

American isolationism comes in two variants. The older and larger feared that the world would corrupt America. The second variant, which flowered in the anti-war movement of the 1960's where Clinton cut his teeth, feared that America would corrupt the world.

Today, Clinton is no isolationist, as he has demonstrated by his support of the North American Free Trade Agreement, the National Endowment for Democracy, and aid for Russia's democratization. But all these policies are under strong challenge in Congress and from the likes of Ross Perot and Patrick J. Buchanan who are working to revive the old isolationism. To the extent that the Clinton administration betrays a residual distrust of American power or disregard of American self-interest, it will only play into their hands.

AMERICA has used force abroad for a large variety of reasons, but all the most important reduce to self-defense. The ghastly experience of World War II drove home the lesson that self-defense is not limited to one's borders. Had America not turned inward after World War I, had the great democracies not abandoned smaller states to their fate, had they been willing to uphold the terms of the Versailles Treaty, had they not acquiesced in aggression in Manchuria and Abyssinia, they might not have had later to fight for their very lives. We put this hard-won lesson to use in the cold war, employing an outward strategy that paid off handsomely. In the name of "containment" we took the whole globe as our chessboard and did many things far from home whose ultimate rationale was our own self-defense.

In contrast, the kind of humanitarian project that we undertook in Somalia had little if anything to do with self-defense. The initial relief mission unveiled a "Bush Doctrine," according to Fred Barnes of the *New Republic*, which applied "to places or crises where the United States has no strategic, political, or economic interest." The United States might intervene in such situations under four conditions, said Barnes in elucidating the new doctrine: "The problem must be horrendous . . . , the chances of success very high, the costs very low, and force used only as a last resort."

Patrick Glynn of the American Enterprise Institute has been a persistent critic of the emphasis on "doability" in this calculus. Glynn feels that action in Somalia has been a cover for inaction in Bosnia. Bush and Clinton both opted to use force in Somalia, where we had *only* humanitarian interests, because it seemed easy, but avoided using it in Bosnia, where Glynn believes (rightly, I think) that we also have security interests, because it seemed difficult.

Glynn draws up a compelling indictment of the calculus motivating Bush and Clinton—security interests, he argues, should be given greater weight than humanitarian interests—but the costs and likely success of a mission are always important considerations, even where the security stakes are large. America refrained from aiding Hungary in 1956 or Czechoslovakia in 1968, although their independence from the Soviet Union would have meant a lot to us, because the dangers seemed too great; and the best argument against the war in Vietnam was not that Communism would be tolerable in Indochina but that the costs of preventing it were prohibitive.

Such considerations in my judgment become all the more important when the mission is humanitarian. We must be very chary of spending American lives in humanitarian missions, not because American lives are more valuable than others, but because an implicit premise of our national polity is to value ourselves before others and because the burdens are not equally shared among us. The men and women who volunteer for service in our armed forces know that their

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ultimate job is to kill and risk being killed, but the rest of us owe it to them not to risk their lives lightly.

This is not to say that a humanitarian mission must be cost-free in terms of American life. Those of us who wish that America had bombed the rail lines to Auschwitz must acknowledge that some airmen might have been lost in the effort. And those who wish that something had been done to stop Pol Pot's mass murder of Cambodians must in theory countenance heavy American casualties. But these two cases, the most frequently-cited examples ripe for humanitarian intervention, suggest that the threshold for expending American lives must be very high.

Did Somalia rise to that threshold? An argument can be made that it did. According to the International Red Cross and other reputable sources, some 300,000 Somalis had died of violence and famine by the time of the U.S. intervention, and another 1.5 million or more stood at risk out of a population estimated at around 6 million. This is a scale of death very similar to the best estimates of Cambodia's tragedy. At its higher range it even approaches the toll of Auschwitz. To rescue that many foreigners, is it worth losing a small number of Americans? There is no algebra for such questions, but I believe that most Americans, including most in uniform, would answer yes.

What is doubtful, however, is whether "nation-building" in Somalia justifies the expenditure of American lives. America has often worked enormous changes in other countries, and transforming Somalia might not be beyond our capabilities. But surely a large and lengthy involvement would be required to suppress the likes of Aidid and to reconstruct and resocialize Somalia. When Somalia was the world's worst emergency, it warranted special attention; but if nation-building is the aim, why Somalia rather than dozens of other places?

Admittedly, without a political transformation, Somalia might slide back into civil war and anarchy and renewed famine. On the other hand, the famine of 1991-92 derived from a confluence of human and natural causes that might not recur even in the absence of such a transformation. Or it might be possible to devise methods to protect food distribution that would be less ambitious than nation-building and less hazardous to American troops.

IF NATION-BUILDING was a dubious cause for which to risk American soldiers in Somalia, what about Haiti?

American and UN mediators had, thanks to intense diplomatic and economic pressure, extracted from Haiti's military rulers an agreement to cede power back to the democratically-elected Aristide, whom they had driven from office. The deal rested in part on the emplacement of some 1,500 UN "blue helmets," including 600 lightly-armed American "trainers," who would give confidence to both sides. They were scheduled to arrive in Haiti in mid-October—just on the heels of the Mogadishu disaster. In the congressional clamor for withdrawal from Somalia, Haitian militarists spotted an opportunity to weasel out of their bargain, and they staged a menacing demonstration against the arriving Americans. The Clinton administration pulled back the soldiers and strengthened economic sanctions, insisting that it would not rule out the use of force to reinstate Aristide.

Although Haiti is an impoverished, disease-ridden country, the issue of military action there does not turn on humanitarian concerns but on the question of democracy. Aristide was fairly elected by an overwhelming majority of Haitian voters. Democracy is itself a humanitarian concern—a matter of human rights—but it also has implications for American security. Since democracies are in general more peaceful than dictatorships, and also friendlier to America, the more democracies there are, the safer this country will be. Consequently, the threshold for using force to spread democracy may be somewhat lower than for using it in pursuit of purely humanitarian grounds.

Nor should it be doubted that America is capable of using force effectively on behalf of democracy. When the U.S. invaded Grenada in 1983, Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan exclaimed: "I don't know that you restore democracy at the point of a bayonet." But that in fact is what we did in Grenada, as we had done in the Dominican Republic in the mid-1960's, and, more importantly, in Japan, Germany, and Austria after World War II.

However, in every one of those cases democracy was the outcome of, not the motive for, American intervention, and it is hard to make a case for using force solely or mainly for the purpose of democratization. Democracy is a high value, but so is peace, and international law will not countenance aggression even for the good cause of democratization. Nor would the American people welcome such a burden. The promotion of democracy is an important American goal best pursued by peaceful means.

The question becomes more complicated where a democratically-elected government has been ousted by force, or blocked from office, or where an internecine struggle pits a faction with strong democratic bona fides against one clearly undemocratic. In such situations, military intervention becomes thinkable, but many factors must be weighed. These include other American interests that may be at stake, the importance of the country in question, the likely costs of the operation, and the probability of success, military and political. In general, the issue of democracy does not present itself in isolation. Thus, for ex-

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ample, the United States invaded Panama in 1990 to uphold democracy but also to protect Americans under threat, to suppress drug trafficking, and to secure the Canal. None of those issues alone would—or should—have precipitated the invasion.

Where Haiti is concerned, there is one strong argument for American intervention and one strong argument against it. The argument in favor is that while Haiti itself is not very important, Latin America as a whole is. Today, Latin America is more democratic than ever, and it is undertaking economic liberalization that holds great promise. In 1991, the Organization of American States (OAS) adopted a declaration in which the democratic governments pledged to support one another against the military usurpations that have been the bane of Latin American political history. Insofar as Haiti, an OAS member, provides a test of this commitment, it takes on a larger significance, although the commitment may be fulfilled through diplomatic and economic pressures rather than military action.

The argument against military intervention in Haiti is the unsavory nature of its duly elected government. Not only is Aristide a politician whose stock-in-trade has been virulent anti-Americanism, but he is also one who during his brief tenure in office encouraged violence against his opposition. Hence Haiti, like Algeria, presents the classic democrat's dilemma: what if the voters democratically elect someone who is anti-democratic? I believe there is no answer to this quandary—which fortunately has arisen only rarely—except to muddle through. In this instance it reinforces the wisdom of seeking a negotiated compromise, rather than a military solution, so that Aristide, once reinstated, is compelled to behave more democratically than he would be inclined to do if left to his own devices.

Of course, humanitarian goals and promoting democracy are not the usual reasons for which America contemplates using force. Our most common and important debates are about security interests that are one or more steps removed from direct self-defense. How far out shall we set our defense perimeter? And what political contingencies shall we deem threatening to it? In addition to defending ourselves against attack, we may fight to defend allies, vital resources, strategic geography, or even abstractions such as commitments, resolve, and law.

The two most important cases with which we have had to wrestle since the end of the cold war have not been Somalia and Haiti, whose tragedies are internal, but rather Kuwait and Bosnia, both victims of their neighbors. In Kuwait we fought to protect a vital resource, to uphold the law against aggression, and to disarm a tyrant who posed a burgeoning threat to peace in a strategically important region. In Bosnia, those who advocate fighting (or at least supporting Bosnia with arms and air strikes) believe it is in our interest to resist aggression, to prevent a wider war in Europe, and to discourage the rise of other aggressive regimes in the states of the former Soviet empire.

No formula will spare us the necessity of examining each case on its individual merits. In recent years, Secretary of State Warren Christopher, former Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger, and others have devised checklists to aid in such assessments. None is an improvement on the traditional Catholic just-war doctrine that dates back to Saint Augustine and which stresses such commonsensical criteria as having a cause weighty enough to justify violence, exhausting other means before resorting to force, having a probability of success, and the like. Weinberger's and Christopher's modern-day versions add the criterion of preexisting public support, but this seems to me an evasion of the responsibility of high officials to persuade the public of the necessity of actions they deem important to our security.

Christopher's list also insists upon an "exit strategy," a desideratum that has been widely reiterated in recent years. As our Somalia experience suggests, an exit strategy is indeed a good thing to have before undertaking humanitarian interventions, but where urgent security interests are at stake, no such luxury may be available.

My own checklist would emphasize trying to uphold the UN charter's proscription of aggression. Beyond that, I believe we are wise to define our security interests widely rather than narrowly. That is what we did in the cold war, and it was amply vindicated. Even Vietnam, the greatest failure of our strategy of forward defense, may be seen in retrospect as a sorry episode in an otherwise overwhelmingly successful policy of containment.

Those who would define our security narrowly like to remind us that America is not omnipotent. Yet this is precisely why we cannot rest secure within a Fortress America or something close to it, why we ought to be concerned with protecting the peace and not just protecting our borders. In Vietnam, which so strongly colors our thinking, we may have reached too far, but the three other major wars we fought in this century were all at least partly brought on by narrow definitions of security—Britain's before World War I, our own before World War II, and the exclusion of Korea from our defense perimeter before the war there.

We need to think not only about when and where to use force but also how to use it. One does not have to accept Colin Powell's doctrine of overwhelming force to see the wisdom of deploying Americans in contingents armed and large enough to maximize their safety. When it was revealed that Secretary of Defense Les Aspin

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had turned down a request for armor in Somalia, he said this decision had reflected his best judgment. No doubt he would have chosen differently had he foreseen or even suspected that he was endangering some of his men. But this only reminds us of what an imprecise thing military foresight is, and of the necessity of erring in the direction of deploying too much rather than too little.

The worrisome question is whether a similarly flawed judgment has shaped the entire Clinton defense program, which, driven by budgetary considerations, cuts our forces much more deeply than Aspin himself proposed when he was still head of the House Armed Services Committee a year ago.

We ought also to be cautious, as we might have learned in 1983 from the loss of the Marines sent by President Reagan to Beirut, about using Americans as peacekeepers or UN peacemakers. America's "comparative advantage" is in an aggressive, not a passive, role. It would be foolhardy to squander the American public's tolerance for accepting casualties in peacekeeping missions that anyone can perform and thereby constrict America's unique warmaking capacity, which is a vital pillar of world peace. That is why it is far more sensible for the U.S. to help Bosnia defend itself than to coerce it into an uneasy surrender and then place Americans between the injured Bosnians and their predators.

WE OUGHT, finally, to be skeptical of UN-led multilateralism. It is important to have allies and the cooperation of other nations, and we may hope that the UN will in time improve. But it still has a long way to go. It boasts a dismal record of hypocrisy and mediocrity, and it remains a body most of whose members are dictatorships, and whose human-rights organs have been chaired by the likes of Cuba and Soviet Byelorussia.

On the ground in Somalia, we got a bracing taste of UN peacemaking. Italian units cozied up to Aidid and were blamed for having jeopardized Nigerians who lost seven men to his forces. According to news accounts, the Italians were even suspected of having tipped off Aidid about one American raid that attempted to capture him. Pakistani units, which back in June absorbed casualties greater than ours of October, were less shaken than we were, but their trigger-fingers were lightened by the experience and they were soon blamed for shooting many unarmed Somali protesters.

But if we should not hitch our wagon to the star of Boutros-Ghali, neither should we beat too hasty a retreat from Somalia. As Senator Sam Nunn said: "The last thing we need is for the word to go out that the way to get Americans to leave a country is to kill a few people." Alas, as Haiti showed, it is too late to slam that barn door. Still, we might minimize the harm by looking for an opportunity to settle scores with Aidid. In Haiti, we should muddle along with our diplomatic endeavors, knowing that between the bloody heirs to the Duvalier dynasty and the mercurial Aristide, the democratic prospect remains cloudy. In Bosnia, though the hour is late, we still ought to help the Muslims and their allies defend themselves.

More broadly, we ought to keep in mind that America's might remains the bedrock of peace and freedom in the world. We ought not to employ force casually, but neither should we reserve it for little more than direct self-defense. For such a course is the one most likely to put us in a position in which we have to use force precisely for direct self-defense, and at a far greater cost in American blood and treasure.

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The Core vs. the Periphery

Fareed Zakaria

On November 6, 1881, in a small town in West Africa, two local chieftains wrote a letter to the Prime Minister of Great Britain. It read as follows:

> Dear W. Gladstone,
>
> We both your servants have met this afternoon to write you these few lines of writing trusting it may find you in a good state of life as it leaves us at the present. As we heard here that you are the chief man in the House of Commons, so we write to tell you that we want to be under Her Majesty's control. We want our country to be governed by British Government. We are tired of governing the country ourselves, every dispute leads to war, and often to great loss of life, so we think it is the best thing to give up the country to you British men who no doubt will bring peace, civilization, and Christianity in the country. Do for mercy's sake please lay our request before the Queen and to the rulers of the British Government. Do, Sir, for mercy's sake, please to assist us in this important undertaking. We heard that you are a good Christian man, so we hope that you will do all in your power to see that our request is granted. We are quite willing to abolish all our heathen customs. . . . No doubt God will bless you for putting a light in our country. Please to send us an answer as quick as you can.
>
> King Bell and King Acqua
> of the Cameroons River
> West Africa

William Gladstone received this letter at an extraordinary moment in British history. Britain made up roughly 25 percent of world GNP—the same as America's share today—and 50 percent of European GNP. London was the unrivaled financial center of the globe. In political-military affairs, Britain had defeated Napoleonic France's bid for continental hegemony and helped establish a stable balance of power on the European continent. More recently, in the Crimean War, it had thwarted Russian expansion in Southeastern Europe. Outside Europe, at very low cost and to great economic benefit, it had conquered large tracts of India and West Asia. In 1881 Britain could reasonably have been called the only superpower in the world.

Gladstone declined King Bell and King Acqua's kind invitation. But Britain accepted many others, so many that over the next twenty years it added five million square miles to its empire. Some of these extensions were motivated by greed or glory or great-power competition, but many were prompted by humanitarian concerns (ending the slave trade, infanticide, bride burning, etc.), and in all cases the dominant cause was a fear of instability and a desire for order. Most of Britain's interventions were, as the great historians of imperialism Ronald Robinson and John Gallagher explain, "involuntary responses to emergencies arising from the decline of Turkish authority." (It was the retreat of Egyptian authority that drew a very reluctant Britain into Somalia, over a part of which it established a protectorate in 1884.)

With its tentacles all over the world, Britain witnessed every outbreak of chaos no matter how distant and felt that it had to do something about each one, fearing in some instances that local conflicts might spill over, in others that inaction might damage London's credibility in the region. Robinson and Gallagher write that because of these fears, "These once remote and petty interests in the Sudan, Uganda, and the northern hinterlands of the Zanzibar were changing into safeguards of Britain's world power."

Meanwhile, back in Europe, the rise of Germany had massively altered the continental balance of power. Yet Britain—and France, which during the same period added three million square miles of new colonies to its own empire—were utterly distracted by an unending series of crises in Africa and Asia, leaving them neither the time nor the energy nor the resources to address their central security problem. Ironically, the exploits of Britain and France in these hinterlands made them inattentive to the very conditions that had created an era of peace and prosperity in Europe and allowed them to engage in imperialism in the first place. Ultimately, both powers retrained their gaze on the central balance of power, but by then it was too late, and what they could do—and did—was ruinously ex-

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pensive. Britain and France—and the world—paid dearly for these distractions.

THE case against a substantial American intervention in Somalia, Haiti, and Bosnia is not based on any concern that the peoples of these countries do not want American involvement—many do; nor that the United States will always fail in its missions—it will not; nor on any doubts that American intervention would do good—it would. The case against substantial intervention in areas, conflicts, and crises that are peripheral to America's long-term strategic interests is that by focusing on the periphery, America, like Britain before it, will lose the core. And devoting itself almost single-mindedly to its central political and economic problems abroad is particularly necessary for the United States in the post-cold-war world because the stable order of 1945 is unraveling. It will take every effort of the United States to arrest this descent and secure the central achievements of the last 45 years—peace and prosperity in East Asia and Europe and an absence of serious rivalry among the great powers of the world.

Great-power peace and the resulting global prosperity are rare. They existed for the first time in modern history during Britain's economic hegemony and the stable balance created by the Concert of Europe during the mid- and late 19th century. During this period—which the historian A.L. Rowse has called the *belle époque* of interdependence—world trade grew, regimes everywhere liberalized and democratized, capitalism surged, and global standards of living rose. The underpinnings of this world crumbled in the wake of World War I with the collapse of British power and the unwillingness of the United States to take its place. Then came mercantilist rivalries, depression, xenophobia, fascism, and war.

The second flowering of peace and prosperity, which took place over the last 45 years, was a direct consequence of the cold war. The Soviet threat and America's security umbrella over East Asia and Europe created a climate of stable fear in which longstanding enemies forswore national rivalries and concentrated on the creation of wealth at home. America's political-military role, the dollar's pivotal place in the world monetary system, the free-trading system (also sponsored by Washington), and American foreign investment all created an open world economy that more than any other single factor explains the extraordinary progress toward peace, democracy, and civilized conduct in the industrial nations over the last half-century.

We take this world for granted, but in fact it is fragile. Henry Kissinger argued in *A World Restored* that the 19th century's era of stability might have been "so pervasive that it contributed to disaster. For in the long interval of peace the sense of the tragic was lost; it was forgotten that states could die, that upheavals could be irretrievable. . . ."

Today we seem similarly to take for granted the conditions of peace and stability among the great powers, and we are eager to move beyond "mere stability" and expand the zone of democracy and justice abroad. But the "long peace" of the cold war rested on both the Soviet threat and American power, and we must first ensure that the collapse of the world's last multinational empire does not unhinge the global balance—as has happened after almost every previous imperial breakdown. Strains in the balance are already apparent: increasing protectionism and trade rivalries at home and abroad; the disarray of European unity; rampant populism, xenophobia, and radicalism in the heart of Western Europe; and the rise of tensions among East Asia's great powers.

If the Soviet threat constituted one ingredient of the long peace, American power and purpose was the second and more important one. This is why it is crucial, and not just for selfish and parochial reasons, that America husband its power and use it with wisdom and caution. If Washington gets so distracted by Africa, the Caribbean, and the Balkans that it loses the ability to focus the bulk of its energies on Europe and East Asia, the resulting strains in global politics and economics could make what is happening in Somalia look like a picnic.

The signs on this front are not encouraging. President Clinton and his senior advisers admit that they have spent 80-90 percent of the time, resources, and political capital that they devote to foreign policy on the three televised hot spots. That leaves 10 percent for various trifles like the future of Europe, the crisis in Russia, relations with Japan, the rise of China, the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), and the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT). Perhaps this misallocation of time explains why the State Department seemed quite surprised to discover that Israel and the PLO were on the verge of an agreement. It surely explains why NAFTA has gone from certain passage to probable defeat, why GATT is unlikely to be resolved by its December deadline, why the administration's position on the expansion of NATO is ambiguous, and why U.S.-Chinese relations seem to sour with every passing day. In the long run what happens in the hot spot of the moment will not matter compared with these big issues, which are the ones that will determine the fate of the post-cold-war world.

THIS is not an argument for doing nothing in the three crises at hand. It is an argument against setting goals that would involve a serious and sustained use of American

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power. Here the Clinton administration has scored poorly. In all three instances the President and his advisers began by defining America's objectives in a strikingly extravagant manner—"the preservation of Bosnia as a multiethnic state within its original borders"; "the restoration of democracy to Haiti"; and "nation-building" in Somalia. All three goals are praiseworthy; but all three would require a significant expenditure of energy, resources, and political capital over a long period of time. Given the stakes involved, are they worth that kind of effort?

Evidently on closer examination the administration thought not. As each crisis unfolded, when confronted with the reality that its goals would require a more vigorous assertion of American military power, the administration backed off, sometimes scaling down those goals, sometimes making a novel distinction between its "preferences" and its "objectives" (the latter being what it could achieve through consensual talks with its allies). While casual about willing the ends, the Clinton administration would not will the means to these ends, exposing the nation internationally to the image of hypocrisy and the reality of a "Lippmann gap"—with its commitments exceeding its power.

Many new interventionists argue that the United States loses credibility when it decides not to intervene in foreign crises. In fact, credibility does not require that the United States respond to every act of aggression anywhere in the world at any price. It does require that the United States choose its interests carefully, that it protect those interests vigilantly, and, most importantly, that in all matters it make threats and promises that it intends to fulfill. Thomas Schelling of Harvard has remarked that in international relations it is always important to remember how expensive are threats when they fail and promises when they succeed. It is the casual use of threats and promises that has damaged American credibility.

On Haiti, after its first reversal over the admission of refugees, the administration seemed stung by the charge—entirely accurate—that it was following George Bush's policy of keeping the Haitian boat people out—the very policy Clinton had attacked as immoral during the presidential campaign. The administration then moved to more active attempts to restore the ousted President, Jean-Bertrand Aristide, to power. But the band of thugs who run Haiti cannot be negotiated with. Restoring Aristide will take the use of the American armed forces—by which I mean soldiers and sailors, not technicians.

America does have interests in Haiti. Instability in the area could affect the neighboring democracies. There is also the threat of an influx of refugees (though ironically this problem is in large part caused by an American action—the economic embargo). These are not, however, possibilities so fraught with danger as to justify an armed intervention at this point. The United States should make clear that it does not condone what the military government of Haiti is doing. It should, perhaps, break diplomatic relations with this regime. If targeted economic sanctions can be devised that do not simply cause general misery, they should be put to work. Such a policy might well result in a change of regimes. If it does, so much the better. But attempting to engineer a domestic revolution should not be the focus—or the yardstick of success—of American policy.

In Somalia, it does appear that Clinton expanded the goals originally set by Bush from a food-aid mission to what the *New York Times* describes as "the largest, most expensive, and most ambitious operation [the United Nations] has ever undertaken." It could be argued that "nation-building" is implicit in famine relief, and that in sending troops to Somalia, Bush was biting off more than he—or Clinton—could chew. But the U.S. was at a decision-point in March, and then again in August, when the hunt for Mohammed Farah Aidid began. And given everything we know about Bush's instinctive caution and prudence—the very qualities many disliked so much—it is difficult to imagine his ambassador to the United Nations saying, as Clinton's ambassador, Madelaine K. Albright, did about the expanded mission in Somalia: "[This is] an unprecedented enterprise, aimed at nothing less than the restoration of an entire country as a proud, functioning, and viable member of the community of nations."

The famine had indeed been caused by a political breakdown. Thus it was claimed that if that breakdown were not addressed, the United States would have withdrawn only to see the return of the very same conditions that it had intervened to end. In foreign policy as in domestic policy, however, an obsession with "root" causes is futile and self-defeating. One can never "solve" the problem of crime; one can merely alleviate its consequences. The United States should not have attempted to address the underlying causes of the famine in Somalia, if by that one means creating order out of chaos; it should have sought to alleviate its symptoms. Creating a polity in Somalia may be beyond America's capacity. It is certainly beyond its capacity at any reasonable cost. But food and medical aid are effective and important cures for a famine; they save countless lives and rescue hundreds of thousands of people from terrible suffering. Since part of the problem was that the aid could not get through, modest military efforts to open up channels of distribution were worthwhile. But the model should have been America's massive aid efforts during

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the Ethiopian famine, not an attempt at nation-building.

HAITI and Somalia are easier cases to discuss than Bosnia, because in the former most observers agree that American interests (however broadly defined) are minimal and that while American policy should be responsive and helpful, Washington cannot be asked to solve their problems. Bosnia is the most vexing of all three, and one of the most painful dilemmas America has had to confront in recent years. This is because where Bosnia is concerned, one could maintain that America has strategic interests in the region, that the response to this crisis has larger implications for American credibility, and that American policy under both the Bush and the Clinton administrations has failed.

There is truth in all these arguments and it is also true that American diplomacy—particularly the politically and morally obtuse arms embargo—has been a failure. But in the final analysis I still come to the painful conclusion that while the United States should do more than it has done in the past, even in this area it should resist any significant and sustained military intervention.

Nobody believes that America has vital interests in the Balkans *per se*. The argument about our national interest in the Bosnian crisis is an argument about European stability in general, and particularly about Western Europe—the most important part of the continent. For this argument to be meaningful, however, there has to be some indication that the Balkan war is likely to spread and become a more general European war. And this is precisely the claim that has been made by many advocates of American intervention, most famously George Kenney, the former State Department desk officer. Kenney wrote in the *New York Times* in September 1992 that within three to six months the war in Bosnia would spread through the Balkans, drawing in Iran, Libya, and other Islamic nations, then Greece and Turkey, and then, against their will, the Western powers.

Needless to say, one year after Kenney's prediction, the first step in this chain of events has not occurred and does not seem likely to occur. Even if it should happen, the second step also seems unlikely. And the last—Western intervention—is the most remote. It is important to understand that conflict in the Balkans led to a general European war in 1914 because the great powers cared *too much* about instability in the Balkans; today they care *too little*. This may cause many problems, but it cannot cause a general war. When Bismarck was asked to intervene in a similar Balkan crisis over 100 years ago, he is reported to have said that the Balkans were not worth the bones of a single Pomeranian Grenadier. Bismarck's indifference led to peace; the paranoia of his successors in 1914, during another Balkan crisis, led to a general European war.

The less specific argument for intervention in the Balkans is that staying out would encourage dictators and would-be ethnic cleansers all over the world. But deterrence is a complex matter. Why did America's breathtaking victory in the Gulf war—televised live all over the world—not deter the Serbs, or, for that matter, the Azeris, the Georgians, or the Sudanese? The answer is that most local dictators come to power because they have a very acute understanding of threats and force. They know that the United States would not send a force of 500,000 troops to liberate Nagorno Karabakh, even though it did so for Kuwait. Conversely, the Red Army refrained from crossing the Fulda Pass in West Germany because it knew that if it did, NATO would respond to such a move with massive force. Yet even in deterring Soviet client-states on the margins, the United States had mixed success during the cold war (hence Korea and Vietnam). Generalized deterrence is difficult.

The problem with American diplomacy throughout the Bosnian crisis has been its utterly incredible nature. It first urged the Bosnian Muslims not to accept partition, then imposed an arms embargo on them—out of a reflexive arms-control mentality—and finally encouraged them in their hope that NATO would intervene on their side. The result has been no Western intervention and an ever-shrinking map for the weak but defiant Bosnian Muslims.

IT IS impossible to discuss Bosnia without referring to the moral issues it raises. For many, the brutal Serb aggression against the Bosnian Muslims and the even more brutal atrocities by the aggressors have made this a supreme moral drama in which the West should intervene, even if it has no strategic interests in the area. To address the moral issue seriously, however, we must first ask the question, "Why Bosnia?" For some the answer is simple, "Why not Bosnia?"—the fact that we cannot right every wrong does not mean that we should never act at all.

But this argument does not stand scrutiny. It is disingenuous to claim that the United States has simply stumbled upon Bosnia in the way that a rich man notices a beggar at his door and feeds him without worrying about all the other, equally deserving beggars he is not helping. There is a reason that every Western news organization has cameras in Bosnia, that Susan Sontag and Annie Leibovitz have traveled there and not to Azerbaijain and Sudan, that it is discussed day after day in newspapers, magazines, and chancelleries.

The most serious reason is this: that for many

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people it is unthinkable that such horrors should happen in Europe. It is one thing for ethnic cleansing to take place in Central Asia, but in Europe? In fact this response rests on a profound misreading of European history. The paradox of European civilization has always been its capacity for supreme achievements of literature, art, music, and politics and for supreme acts of violence at the same time. The history of Europe is a history of fratricidal wars and—yes—ethnic cleansing. Compared to Latin America, Asia, and Africa, European civilization has been marked by almost continuous interstate and intrastate violence.

For the last 45 years, Europe experienced an era of peace and came to believe that it had transcended its history. With the end of the "free security" provided by the United States it will have to accustom itself to the kinds of crises and minor instability that other continents have always lived with. The solution does not lie, at this point, in an ambitious, futile, and probably counterproductive attempt to resurrect the original Bosnian state—noble as that cause is—but to make sure that this conflict does not spread and that it serves to immunize the rest of the continent from violent nationalism and ethnicity. War in Bosnia is tragic; a general European war would be worse.

I would not have written this essay ten years ago. When the Soviet Union existed as a strategic, political, and military threat to the United States, there were dangers of local conflicts spilling over, or of a lack of resolve being misunderstood, or of weak defenses encouraging aggression. Everything we have learned from the archives of the former Soviet Union confirms that the Kremlin was as diabolical and malicious as many cold warriors feared (whether it was as competent and dangerous is another matter). But the Soviet Union has collapsed, bipolarity has crumbled, the cold war is won, Eastern Europe is liberated. In the past, local conflicts were significant because of their role in the broader strategy of containment. One is now struck, with apologies to Alfred North Whitehead, by the unconnectedness of things. Local conflicts really are local. Credibility is amorphous with no great enemy to be credible to. In the face of this world-historical change and utterly new international situation, it is only natural that the United States would need a new foreign policy, one that is "interest-based" rather than "threat-based." Otherwise we will lose the peace we have won.

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Learning from Aidid

A. J. Bacevich

THEY are a study in contrasts. The one goes by the title of President, but in appearance and manner is the very model—if not the parody—of a modern field marshal. It is all there: the Western-style battle dress, the beret, the epaulets, the ceremonial sidearm, the bushy mustache above stiff upper lip that would win approval in any regimental mess, even the entourage of similarly outfitted staff officers and sycophants hovering respectfully nearby.

The other styles himself General, but makes little apparent effort to look the part, his standard "uniform" consisting of slacks and an open-collar, civilian shirt. His public persona is suggestive less of a warrior than of some political hopeful running for election to the city council, his appearances on the front page of our newspapers typically taking place against a backdrop of cheering constituents. His most prominent feature is a seemingly affable grin—incongruous and disconcerting in that his machinations seldom inspire mirth.

Appearances deceive. In this instance, appearances belie expectations. Which of these two individuals—Saddam Hussein and Mohammed Farah Aidid—is likely to possess the greater military acumen? Billed as a formidable opponent, Saddam turned out to be a pushover. Contemptuously labeled a "warlord" or "thug," Aidid has caused the United States no end of consternation and embarrassment. With all due respect to the ghost of General George S. Patton, sartorial splendor would seem to be a poor predictor of generalship.

Yet the deeper deception—self-deception, really—derives from the conclusions drawn from America's successive encounters with these two adversaries, who in confronting the world's only superpower employed vastly different methods to vastly different effect. With the one, America's encounter was a smashing success; with the other, a minor but frustrating failure. Together, they have distorted our understanding of what war is or is becoming. They have confused Americans about the role of force in international politics. And as a result, they have thrown American military policy into disarray.

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II

SADDAM HUSSEIN did more than conform to preconceived American notions of how a "real" enemy should look; his whole approach to warfare reinforced established American views of the proper character and rhythms of war. Just as Saddam affected Western-style battle dress, so did he mimic the standing conventions of combat between modern industrialized states.

Consistent with the age-old faith in big battalions, Saddam weighed his forces down with Soviet-style fleets of tanks, fighter bombers, and guided missiles. He organized and trained his legions (albeit to indifferent standards of proficiency) in accordance with precepts common to mechanized armies going back to World War II. He even initiated hostilities in the manner expected of a dastardly adversary: with an act of brazen aggression.

Yet, having thus boldly seized the initiative, Saddam obligingly allowed the United States and its allies six unencumbered months in which to reclaim it. He ordered his forces to sit idly in the desert while the American-led coalition mustered its forces—equally laden with tanks and fighter bombers and guided missiles—for a massive counteroffensive aimed at liberating Kuwait.

The coalition's success in bringing this episode to a rapid and decisive conclusion dazzled the world. Dazzled in something like a literal sense: Americans themselves found it difficult to gauge accurately the factors contributing to the outcome of Desert Storm. That Saddam's own bungling had contributed mightily to his defeat was noted only to be dismissed. A victory so complete, so one-sided, and so sudden required an explanation more compelling than an inept opponent.

Military analysts discovered that explanation in a concept borrowed from a most unlikely source: Soviet military theory. American performance in the Gulf war, these experts determined, portended the arrival of an entirely new approach to warfare, an approach made possible by what the Soviets termed a military-technical revolution (MTR). Although this technology-driven revolution had been under way for some time—as evidenced, for example, by advances in long-range

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precision weapons, in surveillance and target-acquisition capabilities, and in the military application of computers—it took the showdown with Saddam Hussein to reveal its true scope.

What were the implications of this phenomenon? In short order, discerning an answer to that question became a cottage industry, particularly in the rarefied circles inhabited by Washington's national-security elites. Among the effusions to which this effort gave birth, a report entitled *The Military Technical Revolution*, issued by the highly respected Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) in Washington, may be taken as representative.

The product of extensive deliberations by "over 75 outside experts," the CSIS report heralds Desert Storm as a portent of things to come. In this one brief, spectacular campaign it divines a template for all future combat. Realizing the MTR's full potential will mean, quite simply, that "the face of battle and the nature of warfare will both be completely transformed." Nor will this event be long in coming. By the first decade of the 21st century, according to CSIS, warfare "will look very little like it does today."

IN DESCRIBING the essence of this new style of warfare, the CSIS report generates a fair amount of balderdash: "The MTR is about integration, synergy, and flexibility"; "the MTR is a holistic phenomenon"; the MTR "may boil down to two fundamental effects: tempo and psychology"; "the heart of the MTR is information"; and so on.

On two points, however, the report is emphatic. First, for the foreseeable future, "only the United States has the capability to achieve the MTR." Second, as Desert Storm's low-cost, lightning victory seemed to promise, this revolution in military affairs expands the utility of force. The military-technical revolution will provide American political leaders with an instrument possessing broader application while easing the constraints—notably the prospect of heavy casualties and widespread collateral damage—that heretofore have limited the willingness of democratic societies to use force.

By exploiting the promise of this revolution, the report concludes,

> U.S. leaders will be increasingly free to conduct such operations without assuming massive risks. The MTR will render the military instrument more effective by reducing the costs of military operations, both to the United States and to its adversaries, and will thereby help mitigate the constraints on military operations imposed by media coverage and public opinion.

The language may not be crisp, but the implications are clear: the MTR will free the United States to employ force not simply as a last resort—responding to outrages perpetrated by the likes of Saddam Hussein—but in pursuit of more positive goals.

In short, according to the experts convened by CSIS, the MTR endows the United States—and the United States alone—with the ability to use military power to shape the future political order.

To be fair, the CSIS experts describe the military-technical revolution as still in the process of being realized. Yet, as the "lessons" of Desert Storm worked their way into elite and then into mainstream opinion, such distinctions were soon lost. Confidence in American military superiority became so pronounced that the capabilities foreseen by MTR's prophets acquired the sheen of accomplished fact.

Because such thinking discounted the peculiarly favorable circumstances of the Gulf war—circumstances as much, or more, the product of Saddam's bungling as of American genius—a belief took hold that the "troops" could accomplish almost anything. In the wake of the Gulf war, this perception opened the door to a rush of new American military undertakings. Viewed as a whole, it is the widely divergent character of these tasks that is striking: delivering humanitarian relief (Operation "Provide Comfort"); rebuilding shattered nations (Somalia); deterring the spread of ethnic violence (Macedonia); unseating oppressive regimes (Haiti); protecting minorities (Kurds and Shiites); and parceling out retribution from afar (Iraq)—not to mention proposals too numerous to count for military intervention in Bosnia.

Few of these initiatives were anchored in any prudent calculation of American strategic interests. Rather, as many observers have noted, things were done largely in response to some uproar in the media. But in any case, there was no particular reason not to do them. What was there to lose?

III

ENTER Mohammed Farah Aidid. Whether the Somali leader ever had occasion to contemplate the wisdom proffered by CSIS, the display of American military might in the Gulf war can hardly have failed to impress him. Yet whatever thought Aidid might have given to theories of a military-technical revolution, he remained unintimidated. Contrary to the expectations of many American policy-makers, Aidid did not take to heart the lesson administered to Saddam Hussein and behave accordingly.

As a military commander, Aidid appears to have had one great insight: unlike Saddam, he knew that to play your enemy's game is the height of folly. On the other hand, to engage your opponent on terms that emphasize your own strengths and expose his weaknesses is to gain a priceless advantage. Too few generals have grasped this seemingly simple idea. Grant understood it; Lee

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refused to acknowledge it, and led the Confederacy to exhaustion and collapse. In Vietnam, Ho and Giap understood it; French military leaders of the 1950's and Americans in the 1960's did not, and suffered disastrous defeats at the hands of a nominally weaker power. To be sure, properly applying this insight to the amalgam of circumstances bearing on a particular conflict is far easier to do after the fact than before. But doing so is a mark of true generalship.

Saddam had challenged the United States on terms that could hardly have been less conducive to his own success. It was war in the preferred American style: a high-tech, high-firepower encounter conducted (for the most part) on a battlefield remote from large civilian populations, in which combatants and noncombatants were (for the most part) clearly differentiated, and where the operational goal—liberating Kuwait—had the virtue of being limited and unambiguous.

The terms under which Aidid took on the United States were quite different. For starters, his chosen terrain was urban—a complex and congested environment as alien to American forces as it was intimately familiar to Aidid's supporters. The technology that had given rise to speculation about a revolution in military affairs proved ineffective, if not counterproductive, for close-in urban warfare. By the time Americans resorted to the use of anti-tank guided missiles to root out snipers, it had become apparent that the firepower which had demolished the Iraqi Republican Guards was ill-suited to the streets of Mogadishu. As American attack helicopters took to dispersing crowds of angry Somalis by spraying them with the fire of 20-millimeter cannon, the large numbers of dead and wounded—many of them women and children—suggested that the Gulf war's promise of a style of fighting minimizing noncombatant casualties was a long way from fulfillment.

But all that was nothing compared to the astuteness with which Aidid identified the American "center of gravity"—the point at which Americans are most vulnerable, against which a successful blow will likely have a decisive effect. As is now readily apparent, that point is the new American sensitivity to casualties, a sensitivity as pervasive as it is acute.

No doubt many factors contribute to this sensitivity, not least of them the trauma of Vietnam and even the personal history of the incumbent commander-in-chief. But the main factor is the Gulf war itself, and the expectations inspired by that conflict. As the CSIS report suggests, at the very heart of the military-technical revolution lies the belief that American military power can henceforth achieve success without significant loss of American life. That expectation has become a bulls-eye painted on the chest of every G.I. sent into harm's way.

It was Aidid's genius to seize upon this sensitivity, to orchestrate a campaign in which technological superiority counted for little and in which it would be only a matter of time before a minor reverse laid open the flaws of recent American thinking about war. The bloody firefight of October 3 did just that.

Aidid's reward was not long in coming: the Clinton administration promptly signaled its intention of surrendering the field to the Somali warlord as rapidly as a semi-respectable withdrawal could be arranged. That American military power could destroy Aidid and all his henchmen—could obliterate the entire city of Mogadishu, for that matter—was beside the point. The United States would not do so. Having inflicted approximately 100 casualties on the American forces deployed to Somalia, Aidid had won a victory that by any definition of the term was decisive.

IV

WHAT are the implications of this defeat? Many analysts worry that the setback in Somalia will seriously undermine American military credibility. Whether that will be the case remains to be seen. Much depends on how the Clinton administration manages the details of disengagement, and how it responds to subsequent crises. (Haiti comes immediately to mind.)

In some respects, however, the fallout from Somalia may even be positive. Among other things, the American encounter with Aidid might—indeed, should—accelerate the pace of Gulf-war revisionism. Did Desert Storm give us a glimpse of the future of warfare? Or was the conflict there a splendid anachronism, a style of warfare approaching obsolescence, if now finally done right? Is Somalia an unpleasant throwback to the colonial wars of the previous century? Or does it hint at a type of conflict that will continue to proliferate in the post-cold-war era?

In considering these questions, we cannot remind ourselves too frequently that by its very nature, warfare is rooted in politics. Just so, the continuing evolution of war will be driven by political as much as by technological developments. The world today is entering into a period of profound political transformation; any nation fancying that a corner on the market of leading-edge technology will give it a military mastery that effectively transcends politics is setting itself up for disappointment. Indeed, such a nation ventures forth into an unruly world at its peril.

Somalia provides the United States with a sharp reminder of what that peril entails. The fighting in Somalia has had little to do with the stakes over which wars have been waged since time immemorial—preserving sovereignty, con-

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trolling critical resources, extending spheres of influence, or seizing strategically vital terrain. It has had everything to do with ethnic identity, culture, history, and the rivalry of unsavory local elites vying for the privilege of picking over the remains of their pathetic quasi-state. In this regard, the Somali conflict shows a marked similarity to the brutal and murky conflicts convulsing many other societies of late. Events in Mogadishu—like recent events in Moscow, Sarajevo, Belfast, Monrovia, Port-au-Prince, and perhaps even at New York's World Trade Center—suggest that it is no longer the desert or the steppe or the pampas that forms the cockpit of struggle. Instead, the use of violence to achieve political aims is increasingly an urban phenomenon.

Furthermore, as the fighting in Mogadishu and elsewhere suggests, when war erupts in the streets, distinctions between combatants and noncombatants become blurred, chivalrous "rules" of warfare go by the board, methods appropriate to winning air superiority or targeting armored columns prove of limited utility, and relatively crude hardware—mines, mortars, and small arms—is employed with telling effect. Such conflicts are seldom susceptible of rapid resolution. Where they are concerned, the finesse and expertise that are the hallmarks of modern military professionalism count for less than persistence and pure bloody-mindedness. He who refuses to quit wins—eventually.

Thus, the expedition inaptly named Restore Hope can hardly be said to point the way toward a future in which "U.S. leaders will be increasingly free to conduct such operations," as the CSIS report hopefully predicted. Nor are such conflicts likely to loosen "the constraints on military operations imposed by media coverage and public opinion." Far from it. Absent clearly stated objectives and a persuasive rationale pointing to substantial American interests at stake, the first sign of trouble will provoke a public backlash, a prospect that increases dramatically the political risk of such undertakings.

So if General Aidid has deflated some of the wilder expectations derived from Desert Storm, it may be just as well. The painful lesson he has taught the United States will remain a useful one. The lost battle for Mogadishu has shattered the dangerous illusion that the American military prowess displayed in the desert foretold an era of war without the shedding of American or civilian blood, an era in which American military might would guarantee political order. Americans have learned again what they should never have forgotten: that to resort to arms is a proposition fraught with uncertainty.

The lesson of Somalia is not that the United States must avoid conflicts of that type at all costs. Rather, Somalia reminds us yet again that for even a small war, clarity of purpose, resolution, and willingness to sacrifice are prerequisites of victory. Any adversary worthy of the name will bring as much to the battlefield. No revolution in warfare can guarantee success on the cheap.

The errors and oversights that led to the debacle in Somalia are mostly attributable to Washington. For those errors, young American soldiers paid the price. This is as usual. We can only hope that in helping to restore some sense of realism to American military policy, those sacrifices may yet be redeemed.

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The Real Lessons of Camp David

Rael Jean Isaac

As peace agreements between Israel and its Arab neighbors draw near, Israel's experience with the treaty it already has with an Arab state assumes greater significance. Surprisingly little attention has been paid to the extent to which the terms of the Israeli-Egyptian peace treaty, soon to enter its fifteenth year, have in fact been implemented.

Recently, representatives of the three parties to the Camp David accords have affirmed their satisfaction with the outcome of those accords. In August, Egypt's ambassador to Israel, Mohammed Bassiouny, told a group of American Jewish leaders that the results had "exceeded all optimistic expectations." That same month Israel's Foreign Minister, Shimon Peres, wrote that "the peace with Egypt should set us an example, as it has proven that a stable peace with an Arab country can be achieved and maintained." Interviewed on the Charlie Rose show on September 29, former President Jimmy Carter said, "The treaty has been meticulously observed on both sides."

Although there is widespread awareness, despite such official encomiums, that this is a "cold peace," the absence of war is often treated as sufficient vindication of the treaty. Speaking in 1984, after the Egyptian ambassador to Israel had been recalled "temporarily" for two years, Yehuda Blum, then Israel's UN representative, said that all segments of the peace treaty except one had been violated by Egypt, but that single exception, Egypt's promise never to go to war again with Israel, alone made the entire pact worthwhile.

But the simple absence of war (so far) is a dubious criterion by which to judge the treaty's worth. There has been a similar absence of war (so far) on the Syrian front without a treaty. William Quandt, who was the Middle East expert on the National Security Council in the Carter administration, and whose sympathy for the Arab viewpoint is no secret, nonetheless declared that the Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty had to involve more than the absence of fighting. Shortly after the Camp David accords had been signed he wrote: "Any peace with the hope of permanence must include more than the mere signing of a document. The term 'peace' must evolve to include the necessity of changing the nature of relations between the nations of the area."

But that is precisely the problem. The nature of the relations between Egypt and Israel has not really changed. Israel gave much more than it bargained for to achieve much less than it anticipated. If the peace with Egypt, as Peres asserts, is to set an example, it is an example fraught with peril for Israel.

The extent of the sacrifices made by Israel's Menachem Begin in the negotiations with Egypt's Anwar Sadat are sometimes unappreciated. Although it is widely believed that Sadat's decision to visit Israel was a spontaneous inspiration, Begin had already offered to return the Sinai in secret negotiations between Israel's Foreign Minister, Moshe Dayan, and Egypt's Deputy Prime Minister, Hassan Touhemi. Begin's initial plan, however, called for Israel to retain the Etzion air base in northern Sinai and for the Sinai settlements, of which Yamit was the most important, to remain, although both would be formally under Egyptian sovereignty. But faced with Sadat's fierce rejection—"Even if Israel comes three-quarters of the way, or 99.9 percent of the way, part of our land will still remain in Israel's hand"—Begin relinquished both air base and settlements.

Israel, then, gave more for the treaty with Egypt than it had originally intended. Worse yet, in the end Israel also received much less than it had every right to expect it would get.

The bargain struck by the treaty with Egypt was clear. Israel was to withdraw its armed forces and civilians from the Sinai, giving Egypt sovereignty up to "the international boundary between Egypt and mandated Palestine." In return, Egypt was to establish "normal and friendly relations." Such relations were defined as: "Full recognition, diplomatic, economic, and cultural relations, termination of economic boycotts and discriminatory barriers to the free movement of people and goods." An annex promised that negotiations would follow to fashion agreements fleshing out the details of normalization in specific areas: trade and commerce; cultural relations; free

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movement; transportation; and telecommunications, among others.

Delegations from Israel and Egypt soon met to do just that. The most important agreements produced by their efforts covered civil aviation; tourism; agricultural cooperation; trade; cultural exchanges; transportation; exchange of youth delegations; and cooperation in telecommunications, television, and radio.

Although the texts of the Camp David accords and the subsequent treaty were widely available, the contents of these agreements (some 50 in all) remained unknown and inaccessible. But about ten years ago, Israel's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, apparently unaware that it might later be considered an embarrassment, published a report (*Israel's Foreign Relations: Selected Documents 1979-1980*) containing eight of these agreements. They were amazingly detailed.

Under the terms of the agricultural agreement, for example, Israel and Egypt promised to "undertake joint research projects in fields of major interest, including the exchange of scientists, joint seminars and symposia, and exchange of research information." The two countries would "cooperate in promoting field crops, vegetables, fruit, floriculture, spices, and medicinal plants production." They would also cooperate in animal production, including "poultry, dairy, sheep, and goats with emphasis on breeding, nutrition, and management as well as the organization of artificial insemination." They would work together on veterinary services to "prevent, control, and eradicate the animal diseases affecting the animal population of the two countries." There was to be joint "development and manufacture of veterinary pharmaceuticals and vaccines."

As if all this were not sufficiently spelled out, under the category of "Plant Protection" the agreement called for coordination of "plant-quarantine inspection procedures" and of "post-harvesting and processing activities, including technologies related to production and cleaning of seeds, grading, packing houses, pre-cooling, grain storage, cotton gins, slaughter houses, feed mills, etc." The agreement also promised "joint programs and exchange of experience, methods, and know-how between their respective agricultural extension services and institutions."

A similarly detailed agenda was adumbrated by the cultural agreement, which in Israel's perspective assumed special importance as a means of transforming attitudes among an Egyptian public accustomed to the demonization of the Jewish state. Here the two countries pledged "contacts and exchange of visits of experts in the cultural, artistic, technical, scientific, and medical fields"; "exchange of cultural, educational, and scientific publications"; "exchange of archeological and technical reproductions"; "exchange of art objects and the encouragement of holding scientific, technological, and plastic-arts exhibitions"; and "exchange of radio and television programs, recordings, and tapes, as well as cultural and scientific films."

Israel and Egypt further promised to "facilitate visits of scientists, scholars, and research workers of the other country"; to develop special-equivalence "diplomas, certificates, and academic degrees"; and to "encourage and promote youth and sport activities between youth and sports institutions in each country."

THESE agreements—together with their many other, equally detailed, counterparts—formed the substance of the "normalization," the new era of relations, which Israel believed it was obtaining in exchange for giving up the Sinai. And, indeed, Egypt at first seemed to be moving in that direction. There was a brief period of improvement in images of Israel in the Egyptian press; some tourism from Egypt to Israel; one youth exchange; participation by a substantial number of Israeli firms in international exhibitions in Cairo; and participation by a few agricultural experts in projects in the Nile delta. However, once Israel had completed its three-year phased withdrawal from the Sinai in April 1982, relations were frozen. True, Anwar Sadat, who had led Egypt into Camp David, had by then been assassinated, and Israel's invasion of Lebanon in June of that year did not help matters. But the fundamental reason for the freeze was later offered by King Hassan of Morocco. He reported in 1984 that Sadat's successor, Hosni Mubarak, had told him the treaty was empty of substance since "Cairo had obtained from it what it could."

Thus, within short order Egypt was not merely failing to continue with the positive measures it had promised; it was massively and directly flouting the agreements. Perhaps most important, semiofficial and so-called opposition papers alike kept up a relentless barrage of hostile propaganda. To Israel, ending the "teaching of contempt" was such a central target that it had put the promise "to abstain from hostile propaganda" into the text of the treaty itself. But as Rivka Yadlin of Hebrew University's Truman Center has extensively documented, today only Iran can compete with Egypt as the world center for the publication and dissemination of both original and "classic" anti-Semitic literature. Not only are the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* widely distributed in book form, but excerpts appear in semiofficial Egyptian newspapers, popular television series, and religious broadcasts. There are no favorable portrayals of Israel in any forum to counter the venom.

No charge is too vicious or indeed absurd. Two Egyptian newspapers, *Al-Akhbar* (December 30, 1988) and *Al-Masa'a* (December 11, 1991), portrayed the blowing up of the Pan Am plane over Lockerbie, Scotland, as an Israeli plot. Israel has been accused of introducing hoof-and-mouth dis-

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ease into Egypt (*Al-Ahram*, June 8, 1987); of exporting radiation-contaminated food to Egypt (*Al-Ahram*, April 21, 1987); of introducing "most of the plagues that afflict agriculture and animal health" (*Al-Jumhuriyah*, September 13, 1988); of causing earthquakes in Egypt (*Al-Wafd*, December 27, 1992); of bombing the World Trade Center in New York while contriving to throw blame on the Arabs (*Al-Jumhuriyah*, April 5, 1993); of introducing AIDS into Egypt (*Rose Al-Yusuf*, July 2, 1990); and of polluting the entire globe (*Rose Al-Yusuf*, June 15, 1992).

In cartoons and caricatures, Egyptian newspapers do not portray Jews as they have actually seen them in the Arab world, but rather copy Nazi graphics. When a symbol for the Jew is used, it is a snake or some hideous imaginary monster. Egyptian TV, hermetically sealed against favorable portrayals of Israel, routinely shows anti-Israel and anti-Semitic films. It also broadcasts sermons describing the Jews as enemies of Islam and enmity toward Israel as a religious duty.

So, too, in other fields covered by the treaty. Far from fostering trade, commerce, tourism, and cultural and educational exchanges, the Egyptian government has strangled them. Apart from oil (which Israel buys from Sinai wells it formerly controlled), trade is minuscule. In order to import goods from Israel, an Egyptian company must obtain a "license" requiring the personal approval of the Minister of the Economy—until 1987, the Prime Minister's approval was required. Potential importers are "advised" to reconsider their plans. And the public sector, accounting for 80 percent of Egypt's economy, has been off-limits to Israel.*

In spite of the fact that Egypt undertook to end all economic boycotts of Israel, its government continues in practice to enforce the Arab boycott. Goods with the label "Made in Israel" may not be sold in Egypt, and the press publishes blacklists containing the names of individuals and companies suspected of dealing with the Jewish state. Egyptian trade unions will have no dealings with the Israeli Histadrut, and all unions and professional associations have passed resolutions requiring their members to observe the boycott.

Tourism is almost entirely a one-way affair, from Israel to Egypt. Egyptian citizens are deterred from going to Israel by being forced to obtain a "yellow card" not required of travelers going anywhere else. Those who nonetheless apply often receive visits from the security services. The few individual scientists or other professionals who have traveled to Israel have been boycotted by their professional associations, their example hardly encouraging others to follow suit.

Israeli tourists do venture into Egypt, but it is important to note that they, too, become pretexts for fostering hatred in the press. In 1991 an Egyptian tour guide, Shirin Mahmad Tusun, wrote in *Siaha*: "The odor which the Israeli tourist gives off is unbearable. Even the Israeli woman doesn't worry about her clothing and hates cleanliness. She showers only infrequently because the water and soap cost money. Other tourists have learned to recognize the Israeli by his smell." This is a straightforward borrowing from the medieval Christian idea that the Jew had a peculiar body odor, the *foetor judaicus*, or Jewish stench.

There have been a number of attacks on Israeli tourists on Egyptian soil, the most chilling in 1985 when seven Israelis visiting the Sinai, four of them children, bled to death after being shot by a supposedly crazed Egyptian soldier. Two doctors and six qualified army medics were made to stand by helplessly for more than four hours, kept from the wounded by the guns of Egyptian soldiers. Mubarak pronounced the whole affair a "small matter," and worst of all, the soldier who murdered the seven Israelis was treated as a national hero in the press.

Israelis have hardly been the only victims of attacks on tourists, which have become a favored form of Islamic fundamentalist assault on government authority. What is disquieting is the lack of sympathy for the Israeli victims in the Egyptian press. After nine Israeli tourists were murdered by PLO terrorists in a bus near Ismailiya in 1990, there was a burst of condemnation. But it was not of the murders, for which the press expressed understanding; it was of the PLO's "gross ingratitude" (*Al-Mussawar*, February 23, 1990) in staging the murders on Egyptian soil. The PLO, said Muhammad Qandil, editor of *Akhar Sa'a* (February 21, 1990), would do better to assist the *intifada*, "to dedicate to it the PLO's billions on deposit in secret accounts in Jewish banks."

In violation of its undertaking to end all political boycotts of Israel, Egypt has been in the forefront of attempts to maintain and even increase Israel's isolation. In 1989 the then-Soviet ambassador to Egypt reported his surprise on being summoned by the Egyptian Foreign Minister who protested a proposed Soviet thawing of relations with Israel. When the ambassador observed that Egypt had diplomatic relations with Israel, he was told that Egypt had no choice, but the Soviets did. He was also told that "resumption of relations with Israel would harm the Arab boycott." Further, Egypt repeatedly urged African nations not to resume relations with Israel. And when, during the Bush administration, the United States led the effort to rescind the UN's Zionism-equals-racism resolution, Egypt headed the unsuccessful campaign to keep the resolution intact.

What Israeli leaders who put such hope in Camp David do not seem to have realized was that normalization had very different meanings

* As a great "concession," Mubarak, on Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin's recent visit to Egypt, offered to allow Israel to bid for contracts. But bureaucratic obstacles can of course continue to prevent Israel from actually winning them.

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for Israel and for Egypt. For Israel normalization was the essence of peaceful relations. For Egypt normalization was yet another form of Israeli aggression. Thus an article in *Al-Jumhuriyah* (June 4, 1985) complained: "Israel thinks that Camp David entitles it to a cultural and economic invasion of Egypt. That is why it insists on normalization and on special relations with Egypt. . . ."

GIVEN that normalization has proved a mirage, the demilitarization of the Sinai and Egypt's promise to keep the peace have become the only benefits accruing to Israel from the Camp David accords. But here, too, the situation is worrisome. When Israel signed the treaty, the then-chief of staff, Mordechai Gur, demanded that the Egyptians dismantle their huge armed forces, move to a system of reserves, and transfer a portion of their regular forces to other fronts. Egypt refused. Its armed forces have continued to be built on the premise that their prime role will be on the Israeli front. Moreover, despite the hope that Egypt would scale down its military forces, it has vastly increased its military capabilities since Camp David.

Here the United States has helped with $20 billion of arms and economic aid, over $7 billion of which was forgiven as a result of Egypt's participation in the Gulf war. In the fifteen months following that war, Egypt purchased $2.4-billion worth of arms, a huge increase over 1990. Egypt is now building the largest air force in the Middle East. In addition, thanks to the strategic relationship it has developed with the United States as a result of Camp David, Egypt is producing the main American battle tank, the A-1 Abrams; has a license to produce the most up-to-date two-dimensional U.S. radar system; and is cooperating with the U.S. in developing a third-generation shoulder-carried anti-tank missile.

Finally, Egypt has created the infrastructure for substantially greater forces than are permitted to it under the agreement, and remilitarization could be swift. It has even built tunnels under the Suez Canal, making transfer of forces easier to camouflage and harder to prevent.

But does all this mean that Egypt is also prepared to break its promise "never to go to war again with Israel"—the promise which Yehuda Blum said in itself made the treaty worthwhile?

Actually, the promise itself was formulated in ambiguous terms. At Camp David, Egypt insisted upon the stipulation that the treaty with Israel did not take precedence over Egypt's other treaties with Arab states, according to which Egypt was bound to go to war against Israel if one of them was "attacked." The Israelis at first protested but then went along when mind-boggling "minutes" were appended saying that this stipulation should not be construed to contradict the promise of peace.

In the wake of Camp David, the rest of the Arab world severed ties with Egypt, temporarily removing the problem. But by 1987 Egypt's relations with most of its Arab brothers had been largely restored, and since then Egyptian leaders have emphasized that the Arab League Collective Security Pact does in fact take precedence over Camp David.

In 1987, for example, Egypt's Defense Minister, General Abu Ghazzala, made just such a statement (*Al-Shiraa*, Lebanon, October 27, 1987), and told the Defense and National Security Committee of the Egyptian People's Assembly that Israel was Egypt's "principal and sole enemy" and that, together with Syria, Egypt could achieve a "crushing" victory over the Jewish state (*Near East Report*, September 11, 1989). In 1988, Usama al-Baz, director of the President's Office for Political Affairs, announced: "Egypt's commitments to its Arab sisters outweigh any other commitments to any other side" (Middle East News Agency, November 13, 1988). The semiofficial press has also been speaking of a "life span" of fifteen to twenty years for the treaty with Israel, arguing that Egypt signed it out of "necessity," not of its own free will. In mosques it is commonplace to compare Camp David to the Khudaibiyeh Treaty, which lasted for ten years before the Prophet Muhammad conquered the tribe involved.

AS ISRAELI leaders once again pursue peace treaties with other Arab neighbors, they would do well to attend to the implications of the Egyptian "model." (The same holds true of the United States, which bids fair to become "guarantor" of certain aspects of those treaties.)

In the current issue of the *National Interest*, Douglas Feith, a Defense Department official in the Reagan administration, points out that "political leaders around the world show much greater interest in the conclusion of new treaties than in compliance with those already on the books." To judge from the willingness of Israel's leaders to embark upon new agreements despite the dismal record of compliance on the Egyptian treaty, this seems to be true of them as well. The United States also, despite the leverage it possessed over Egypt by virtue of military and economic aid, made no effort to hold Egypt to its normalization commitments—even though that aid was premised upon Egypt's signature on the treaty whose provisions it now ignored.

But to devalue compliance with existing treaties, as Feith points out, is to foreshadow the lack of respect that will be shown to treaties now under negotiation. Feith points out an obvious if uncomfortable truth: democratic countries are at a marked disadvantage in concluding treaties with nondemocratic countries. For when the nondemocratic party violates the agreement, the democratic party wants to avoid a confrontation. Consequently, it belittles, or denies, or makes

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excuses for, or, as with the Egyptian treaty, simply ignores the violations. After all, what are the options? Going to war?

In the case of Egypt, there was another reason for Israeli silence. Likud did not want the public to focus upon the Egyptian violations because Camp David, negotiated by a Likud government under Menachem Begin, was its proudest achievement. As for Labor, it hoped to sign more such treaties with Israel's neighbors, and pointing to defects in the implementation of the only existing one was not likely to inspire confidence in their utility.*

Israel's neighbors are well aware that Egypt has shelved with impunity the elaborate agreements for normalization. The kind of peace Egypt made is one that Syria's Assad and the PLO's Arafat can contemplate without undue disquiet. The formula is simple. Israel goes back to the pre-1967 borders. The other side signs pieces of paper and observes, or fails to observe, them as it chooses.

Israel paid an extremely high price for the agreement with Egypt. It not only sacrificed strategically important territory, oil independence, and settlements, but paved the way for the rearming of Egypt by the United States. In return, once Israel had completed the Sinai withdrawal, it was left with little more than nonbelligerency from Egypt. But in assessing the value of this, it is worth stressing once again that, without such sacrifices by Israel, there has been no war on the Syrian front, either.

Presumably Israel's leaders hope that by coming to terms with Palestinians, Syrians, and Jordanians, they will shore up the peace with Egypt. But Israel will be more vulnerable inside the 1949 borders (or close to them) to which it will have to withdraw in order to conclude such new agreements. Will Israel obtain peace, even a chilly one, as a *quid pro quo*? Or will Israel's neighbors be encouraged by its increased vulnerability to attempt their "final solution"? While it is impossible to say with certainty, any sober risk assessment would have to regard the Egyptian experience less as a model than as a warning.

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* Judging from the behavior of government officials, the only element of normalization that Israel seems to consider vital is the presence of an Egyptian ambassador. Thus, after Egypt recalled its ambassador "temporarily" in September 1982 following Israel's invasion of Lebanon and years went by without his return, Israeli officials—including the then-Prime Minister, Yitzhak Shamir, and the then-Defense Minister, Moshe Arens—began complaining about Egypt's failure to keep the promises of normalization. But once Egypt appointed a new ambassador—after four years!—the complaints largely faded away.

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Thirty Years of the "New York Review"

Joseph Epstein

I AM A thirty-year, greatly dissatisfied subscriber to the *New York Review of Books*. From the beginning, despite the savings a multiple-year subscription could bring, I have renewed one year at a time—partly because, in the event of my death, I do not wish to complicate my estate, let alone have the thing coming into the house after I am gone; and partly because I do not want the journal to have the advantage of the minuscule additional interest my long-term subscription would earn. Fair to say that I do not wish the *New York Review* (*NYR*) well, even though I expect to continue reading it for the foreseeable future—during which indefinite period of time, I have no doubt I shall continue to be dissatisfied.

I am also the author of a single piece in the *New York Review*, which appeared as far back as 1970, and I have had one book of mine reviewed (harshly) in its pages. That was, I believe, in 1974. Because I have published nine more books since then, none of them reviewed in the journal, I suspect I may be under a boycott. But I am not complaining, and I do not in the least mind things remaining this way, for I know it would be difficult for my books to be treated fairly in *NYR*. I am, after all, the fellow who said, in print, some time in the 1970's, that the contributors to *NYR* were made up of mad dogs and Englishmen. I would emend that today to read chiefly sly dogs and Englishmen, but I doubt the emendation would help matters.

In expressing dissatisfaction with a journal to which I have subscribed for so long, I feel rather like the man who complains to the restaurant owner that everything about the meal he has just eaten was too cold or too hot, too sour or too sweet, too over- or too underdone—and besides, the portions were awfully small. It would be ungracious not to admit that I have had some memorable intellectual meals in the pages of *NYR*: Joseph Brodsky on Odessa; V.S. Naipaul on Argentina; Edmund Wilson and Vladimir Nabokov putting the finishing touches to their friendship in arguing over the quality of Nabokov's translation of *Eugene Onegin*; John Searle on the breakdown in higher education; Malcolm Muggeridge on the hagiography of John F. Kennedy and on pornography.

But the same establishment has over the years turned out some powerful ptomaine as well: a then-young journalist named Andrew Kopkind condescending to instruct Martin Luther King, Jr., in paraphrase of Mao Zedong, that "morality, like politics, starts at the barrel of a gun"; Tom Hayden approving the 1967 race riots in Newark, New Jersey, on essentially Leninist principles ("the worse the better") and because they helped create the "conscious guerrilla" who, "if necessary, can successfully shoot to kill"; Mary McCarthy, in her reporting from Vietnam, making the Ho Chi Minh Trail seem like the Yellow Brick Road; the famous instructional drawing of how to make a Molotov cocktail that appeared on the journal's cover for its issue of August 24, 1967, a piece of radical porn that no one ever fails to mention.

To retain the restaurant metaphor a moment longer, *NYR* is a place where one clearly does best to order *à la carte*. And so, for many years now, I have done: reading the pieces on literature, music, art, and science, and devoting less and less attention to the political side of the menu. Yet, I would guess, it is the *table d'hôte*, sloshed together and served up in a gumbo, that attracts most of the journal's readers. Many of these people have treated it, from its very beginnings, as an all-you-can-eat joint, and they cannot seem to get enough.

I RECALL those beginnings well. A brainchild of the Random House editor Jason Epstein, *NYR* came into being during the New York newspaper strike of 1963. The timing was more perfect than even the journal's founder and principal editors could have known. Anyone with any intellectual interests had long ago given up on the *New York Times Book Review* as a serious forum for the discussion of books. (It was edited in those days by a man who used to refer to reviews as either "up" or "down" and who much preferred the former, as did the publishers he saw himself as servicing.) But other vacuums,

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which not only nature but journalism abhors, were also beginning to open.

Partisan Review, the great intellectual journal of the 1940's and 50's, was coming unstrung; its chief editors, William Phillips and Philip Rahv, would soon split up, the latter to form a short-lived magazine called *Modern Occasions*. *Encounter*, the young but already splendid magazine published in London, would presently lose many of its most distinguished contributors with the revelation that some of its funds were derived from the American Central Intelligence Agency. Around this time, it is true, the *New Yorker* and *Esquire* were opening their pages to such writers as Dwight Macdonald and Harold Rosenberg, who previously had written exclusively for such intellectual magazines as *Partisan Review*, *Encounter*, and of course COMMENTARY. But here, suddenly, was a new biweekly American journal, the *New York Review of Books*, playing the intellectual equivalent of catcher in the rye, gathering in all these people with a taste and talent for highbrow journalism and few places to put it.

At its upper reaches, the masthead of *NYR* has not changed since its inception. Its two principal editors have been notable in not allowing themselves, at least in a public way, to be very notable. Of the two, Barbara Epstein, previously an editor in book publishing, was the wife of Jason Epstein when the journal was founded; and Robert B. Silvers had worked as an editor at *Harper's* and before that at *Paris Review*. Neither Mrs. Epstein nor Mr. Silvers writes; neither signs proclamations, provides book-promotion blurbs, or announces political positions (not that they need to). So much an anonymous *éminence grise* has Silvers been that Edmund Wilson, a long-time and much-honored contributor to *NYR*, could recount, in his journal (*The Sixties*), spending an evening at a dinner party in the company of the publisher Robert Giroux and mistaking him all the while for Silvers.

Whether Silvers or Mrs. Epstein has been the greater force in the shaping of *NYR* is not a subject one hears much about. Scuttlebutt has it that Silvers is more passionately interested in the political side, Mrs. Epstein in the cultural. Silvers would also appear to be the more actively engaged in the day-to-day running of the journal. Probably only a bachelor, monomaniacal and with limited outside ambitions, could have brought out such a journal over so long a stretch of time with a limited staff and—until recently, when it was bought by a millionaire Southerner from a newspaper-publishing family named Rea Hederman—fairly moderate financial resources. Silvers, too, appears to be the journal's main man in London, where the *New York Review* has become so fashionable that an Englishman of my acquaintance describes Silvers's visits as having something of the aura of the Viceroy of India home on furlough.

ALTHOUGH the measure of *NYR* is best taken through its political and cultural positions, both discrete and cumulative, it is not by these alone that one is likely to understand its remarkable success. The journal has a large social component. Take, for example, its first major contributors. These prominently included Igor Stravinsky, W.H. Auden, Edmund Wilson, Robert Lowell, and Isaiah Berlin. All were bona-fide figures from the world of art and intellect, but they also represented culture with a cachet—the cachet in this instance being international, cosmopolitan, in good part English. If culture can be said to have a class hierarchy, *NYR* was clearly upper-class in its intellectual pretensions, a place where Bunny (Wilson) spoke only to Isaiah, Igor spoke only to Wystan (Auden), and Cal, a Lowell after all, only to God.

These contributors served as a powerful magnet to draw in others. Writers are great snobs—perhaps the greatest of snobs. If there is guilt by association, why not glory by association? To have one's prose appear in *NYR* between a Stravinsky interview and an essay by Edmund Wilson was enough to cause a writer to quiver and swoon, overcome with the belief that he had arrived. Many writers indeed have appeared in *NYR* who dissent more or less strenuously from its politics yet have not been able to resist the temptation, as if the journal were a party which, even though one dislikes much of the company, one nevertheless cannot afford to miss.

But the larger point is that *NYR* began life as the journal of a special kind of American establishment. This establishment was neither economic nor political but cultural and social. Here the English connections helped. Although England today may be enfeebled in many ways, Anglophiliac snobbery still rings the gong here in the colonies. At American universities, a sound estimate is, a good English accent can still bring its bearer anywhere from $10,000 to $20,000 more in professorial salary than he would get without it. And *NYR*, at least as these things run, had some fairly tony Englishmen among its contributors, including various lords—Dacre (also known as H.R. Trevor-Roper), (Noel) Annan, (Solly) Zuckerman—as well as classicists, art historians, medievalists, and scientists who added to the journal's social as well as its intellectual luster.

In the early days, the cultural pieces contributed by these figures seemed very close to a cover for the review's politics. A very good cover they made, too. E.H. Gombrich and Isaiah Berlin rattling on about Renaissance pictorial values and the history of ideas gave legitimacy to defenses of the Black Panthers and Vietnam war protesters. Of course, the division between culture and politics within the same journal is hardly a new story. In the old British *New Statesman* under Kingsley Martin, the front of the book, with its defenses of

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Stalinism in Russia and arguments for Fabian socialism at home, and the back of the book, with its high literary sensibility and defenses of traditional culture, seemed almost at war with each other—and the wonder always was why this division was allowed to persist. Something similar existed in America at the *Nation* in the 1940's.

No such division, however, seemed to obtain at *NYR*. The artistry in the editing lay in making the cultural component seem to be not separate from but in easy harness with the politics; the combination seemed to suggest that culture of this splendid and elevated kind issued naturally out of, and also led back into, the Left politics that gave the journal its true bite and was, many felt, its true reason for being.

One does not get a very good sense of this from *The First Anthology*,* a collection of pieces from *NYR*'s first 30 years. As an anthology the book is rather disappointing, both in itself and especially as an accurate reflection of the journal's history. Although many of *NYR*'s most valued contributors do appear—Isaiah Berlin, Elizabeth Hardwick, W.H. Auden, Hannah Arendt, Gore Vidal, V.S. Pritchett, Susan Sontag—reading the anthology in isolation from the magazine conveys the quite false notion that *NYR* has been chiefly a publication devoted to intellectual and cultural life.

True, politics is more ephemeral than culture, and hence less the stuff of which lasting anthologies are made. True, too, even in these carefully culled pieces there are interesting little lapses into political snobbery or politically-correct hyperbole. Susan Sontag leads the way here in her essay, "On Photography," in which she writes that "taking pictures is a soft murder, appropriate to a sad, frightened time," and calls the Korean war "an ecocide and genocide in some respects even more thorough than the ones inflicted on Vietnam a decade later." But such lapses aside, *The First Anthology* reads like conversation at high table in an Oxford college. This may be one characteristic note of *NYR*, but it is far from the full scale.

Every magazine or journal, I sometimes think, should also publish an anthology of the pieces it has run in the past of which its editors are, or ought to be, thoroughly ashamed. *NYR* could, on this basis, put together an impressive volume. The entries would come almost exclusively from the political realm, and would demonstrate the journal's support of student uprisings and race riots; its ingrained distrust of Israel; its defense of human rights without feeling the need (until fairly late in the game) to take the offensive against Communism, the greatest abuser of human rights in our era; its persistently negative attitude toward the policies of its own country no matter who the foe or what the objective ("My country, wrong or wrong," might have been *NYR*'s motto); and its great care in walking any number of lines, fearful of stepping on mines that might lose it one or another of its prized constituencies. Such an anthology would not make delightful but it would make more interesting reading than the one the editors have, with diplomatic delicacy, put together.

The great days of *NYR*—which were far from being the great days of the country—were those of the Vietnam war, the assassinations of public leaders, and the race riots in American cities. These were the days when the featured pieces were by Noam Chomsky, Paul Goodman, Barrington Moore, Jr., I.F. Stone, Richard Barnet, and other intellectuals of the radical Left. A great rush was on, too, to reform primary education, getting it off the track of warmongering capitalist values, and so the journal was full of the words of John Holt, Edgar Z. Friedenberg, Ivan Illich, and Herbert Kohl. The old society was caving in, the new waiting to be built. Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive,/ And if you could not write for *NYR*,/ At least you could subscribe.

As one runs through back issues of *NYR* one is reminded how relentlessly and consistently it played at the game of revolution. Its steady line was that America was one just about unrelieved hell. Here were Gar Alperovitz assigning much of the blame for the cold war to the United States; Stokely Carmichael (right on the heels of Sir Stuart Hampshire writing about Virginia Woolf) informing his readers that black neighborhoods in American cities were essentially colonies; Berkeley sociologists arguing that the contemporary university, as currently constituted, did not deserve to survive; Andrew Kopkind laying the troubles of the world on the CIA; the Berrigan brothers recounting their travails as Vietnam-war protesters; Paul Goodman ending his throat-catching account of the "We Won't Go" anti-draft movement by saying that among these young men "I did not hear a sentence that was not intelligent, nor a tone that was not beautiful"; Noam Chomsky referring to the Pentagon as "the most hideous institution on earth"; Robert Heilbroner waiting for the death of capitalism as if for a bus into utopia; Philip Rahv trying on the role of an American Plekhanov, advising that, during a time of revolutionary ferment, constructive ideas may only get in the way; Murray Kempton idealizing the Black Panthers; F.W. Dupee exulting in the student uprising at Columbia; Christopher Lasch calling for a third American political party "based squarely on radical principles"; Mary McCarthy finding George Orwell's political virtue wanting, because less impressive than her own; James Baldwin, with his talent for apocalyptic phrase-making, dubbing the United States "this most sinister and preposterous of Edens"; regular and

* Edited by Robert B. Silvers, Barbara Epstein, and Rea S. Hederman. New York Review, 345 pp., $27.50.

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extended coverage of political trials; and the caricaturist David Levine, who somehow did not quite turn out to be our Daumier, drawing Lyndon Johnson and Dean Rusk as Bonnie and Clyde, the late Mayor Richard J. Daley of Chicago as a pig, and Richard Nixon as a rabid dog.

A good time, it seems, was had by all.

THAT *NYR* was, in retrospect, wrong about almost all these matters is perhaps less interesting than why its wrongness attracted so many readers. A piece by Ronald Steel on a Black Panther conference in Oakland (September 11, 1969) provides part of the answer. Steel writes that "the Panthers' Marxist-Leninist language combined with their Fanonist theories of psychological alienation and third-world solidarity [makes] them particularly appealing to middle-class white militants, who share their ideology but lack their discipline."

But "discipline" is not really the correct word here; what Steel means is that the Panthers really did seem to be putting their lives on the line for their beliefs. My guess is that while this is something neither the writers nor the readers of *NYR* ever, for a moment, considered doing, through its pages they could imagine themselves capable of doing it; they could even imagine they *were* doing it.

Such politics must have been all the more attractive for not costing anything. Thinking Left and living Right is an old story—at least as old as Henry James's *The Princess Casamassima*. But never has the story played so successfully in a magazine as in *NYR*, which at its inception even had, in a man named Michael Field, a superior writer on the subject of food. When Stokely Carmichael declared in the journal's pages that America was a racist nation, "top to bottom," he did not, it was clearly to be understood, intend quite to include the readers of *NYR* in his sweeping condemnation; and besides, that was a lovely new poem by Auden in the same issue, was it not?, and V.S. Pritchett was awfully good, was he not?, on the new Malamud novel.

Not everyone took the radical politics featured in *NYR*'s pages altogether seriously. I recall, in the late 60's, remarking to Saul Bellow that Philip Rahv and Irving Howe were conducting an argument about revolution in the letters column of *NYR*, to which Bellow replied that it sounded to him like nothing so much as two old guys arguing furiously at the back of a synagogue about . . . Lady Astor's horse.

For a single-paragraph encapsulation of *NYR*'s politics, one might look at the ending of Ronald Steel's piece on the Black Panthers:

> America is not now a "fascist" country, nor is it likely soon to become one, although this is not impossible. Probably it will continue to be an advanced capitalist society in which cruel inequalities and repression, unlivable cities, and inhuman conditions of work continue to exist along with considerable liberty to take political action, while our rulers control an empire of poor nations abroad. It is the duty of the Left to find ways to change this system: to educate people rather than simply abuse them; to use the universities as places where the complex problems of replacing repressive capitalism and imperialism with a better system can be studied seriously; to stop playing Minutemen and begin acting like radicals. If there is ever going to be a revolution in this country, it will have to happen first in people's heads. What takes place in the streets of a society like this one has another name. It is called repression.

That was written during the Vietnam war, but I should not be surprised to learn that, minus the invocation to activism, many of *NYR*'s most devoted readers still believe it to be a substantially accurate depiction of the United States. Although the journal has greatly toned down the radical note in its latter years, as recently as its issue of November 4, 1993, one finds Gore Vidal reviewing the final volume of Edmund Wilson's journal and writing, apropos of Wilson's earlier book, *The Cold War and the Income Tax*:

> The American people were kept frightened and obedient by a fear of the Soviet Union, which their government told them was on the march everywhere, as well as by the punitive income tax, which was needed in order to pay for a military machine that alone stood between the cowed people and slavery. It was better, we were warned, to be dead than red—as opposed to in the red.

SO MUCH for politics in the pages of the *New York Review*. As for culture, that too has been of a very particular kind. What is once again noteworthy in this connection is how thoroughly of the elite have been—and remain—the contributors to *NYR*, for all its radically egalitarian passion. Its English writers have been preponderantly Oxbridge, its American academics chiefly from Ivy League schools. In these institutions, too, the journal has found its most satisfied readership. As others have remarked, *NYR* has never been a place where new talent is discovered; on the contrary, appearing in its pages has been a sign that a contributor—Bruce Chatwin, Julian Barnes, Robert Stone, *et al.*—has now arrived.

But if, in politics, the elitism of *NYR* has gone hand in hand with radical revolutionism, in culture the same elitism has taken a different form altogether. The journal has been careful never to risk straining its muscles by jumping on every passing cultural bandwagon. In literary criticism, it has steered clear of post-structuralism, deconstruction, and other zany English-department dalliances. (In part, this may be owing to the fact that writing of this kind is fundamentally unread-

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able, and *NYR* can at least claim a continuous tradition of clarity.) Nor has it gone gaga over Derrida, Foucault, and the rest of the French gang. While feminist in its general stance, it has also shied away from the madder kinds of academic feminism that see a phallo under every centrism. *NYR* has treated the issue of the normalization of homosexuality the way one treats a thousand-pound gorilla—very gingerly. It is for tolerance, which is easy; but while it has not aligned itself with the stridency of the gay/lesbian-liberation movement, neither has it uttered a word of criticism against it. The editors will print Gore Vidal engaging in homosexual gossip but not in explicit homosexual polemic.

In culture generally, then, *NYR* has kept its skirts clean. During the wildest of its political flights in the 1960's, it never mistook rock and roll for art, nor proclaimed the music of the Beatles to be the cultural equivalent of T.S. Eliot's *Four Quartets*. It has lost its head neither over movie directors nor over contemporary visual artists. The detritus of publicity culture has not attracted it. Quite properly, *NYR* prizes all those dear dead white males whose works comprise the chief treasures of Western civilization. Far from being trendy, in its approach to culture the journal has if anything tended to be conservative, even a little staid.

That may be part of the reason why the feeling among most intellectuals and academics these days is that *NYR* was at its best when it was at its worst—that is, when it was playing at revolution and cheering on the North Vietnamese, the Black Panthers, and the draft-card burners from its bunker in the Russian Tea Room. The journal has long since pulled back from those horrendous days. Middle-aged now (its editors are in their mid-sixties), *NYR* retains its taste for rather selectively raking muck, for jabbing at people in economic or political power from the standpoint of people who cannot really envision themselves out of intellectual or social power. *NYR* seems decidedly less than eager to take another shot at revolution and perfectly content to let Theodore Draper and others with a taste for such sport shoot off eyeball-glazing articles that seem only a bit shorter than the Thirty Years' War, with footnotes intended to take little nicks out of the reputations of larger men.

WHEN its editors retire, the *New York Review* figures to slide from prominence. By their own lights, though, they had a terrific run. They have made a great and lengthy stir. Prose from some of the best minds of our time has appeared in their pages: scholars, artists, perhaps the last generation of free-ranging belletristic intellectuals. The result has been a journal that even people who have detested its politics felt they had to read; I can produce 30 canceled checks in evidence.

The *New York Review* holds a place in the history of modern journalism, constituting as it does one of the four genuine innovations in periodical publishing in this century. First, there were Henry Luce and Briton Hadden, who at *Time* invented the newsmagazine, packaging accounts of current events in peppy and concise form for impatient readers. Second, there was Hugh Hefner, who, at *Playboy*, brought the Bible into the whorehouse by publishing ostensibly serious material—interviews with Bertrand Russell, stories by Graham Greene—alongside what we should today call soft porn. Third, there was Clay Felker, who, at *New York*, invented the magazine dominated by the consumer spirit, with its unrelieved interest in status, money, and scandal, and not really much else.

Finally, there is *NYR*, which has been able to make an unrealistic and damaging politics not only more than palatable but, in many quarters, immensely appealing by interweaving it with, by causing it to seem indistinguishable from, high culture. Thanks to this extraordinary innovation, *NYR*, now thirty years old, has become the representative intellectual journal of our age, with the important qualification that it has not been a great age and the *New York Review of Books* has done more than its share to diminish it.

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Saying Kaddish

Jacob Sloan

I HAVE recently gotten into the habit of saying Kaddish, the Jewish memorial prayer, for Gentiles. This may be unusual, but I need no rationale to justify extending a traditional Jewish family rite to non-Jews. The persons for whom I say Kaddish were all members of my so-to-speak extended family—in-laws on my wife's side of whom I was fond.

Still, I am puzzled about this newfangled practice of mine. For I still remember all too vividly a time in my life when saying Kaddish was a daily torment, a reminder of my hapless confusion and disorientation as an orphan boy in a world ruled by crabby old men passing their final gray years in ritual repetition of prayers they did not understand. And here I am now, myself an aged, too often angry man in a world with which I am not at ease, seizing every opportunity to recite the same Kaddish that was the bane of my existence some 60 years ago! Why do I persist in going back time after time to that low point from which I have struggled so long and hard to rise?

Is it that death is still, in the current parlance, "my thing"? Can it be the memory of other bad times, when I have suffered or brought pain to others, that I am trying to atone for with this sanctification of God's name? Is it because I secretly agree with the Midrashist that "prayer is midway to atonement"?

I was eleven when my father suddenly (to me) died. Actually, he had had a severe heart attack several weeks before, and I had visited him in the hospital, at his request. He had given me a strange, quizzical, compassionate look out of his light-blue eyes. I had been told to leave. A week later, he died at home.

My first, and for a long time only, reaction was one of uncertainty. I simply did not know what I should be feeling. I had come across references to death (in fact, dramatic depictions) in many of the books I read. But none of them had prepared me for the time after death as an enduring numbness. People in books were usually said to be unhappy for a line or two, and then they would go on with the exciting plot of their lives. For me, life just came to a standstill. Was that *it*—was that *all*?

Early one morning my mother had unexpectedly screamed my father's name from the bedroom they shared. (Even then I had sensed the incongruity: my father's name was Simha, meaning joy.) Then my elder brother and I were told that Papa had died.

I was at a loss. Nobody explained anything to me. There was a funeral, which I do not remember, then a week of mourning, during which we sat at home. I recall sensing a gap, but it was not enormous. I had had a father whom I did not know very well. Now he was gone. His place had never been a large one in my life, and now it would be empty. Years later I would be moved by Job's summation of mortality: "His place shall know him no longer." My father, precisely.

My bald, full-lipped father was a kind of friendly absence, a rare visitor at home. He taught Hebrew in two schools: full-time in a so-called "progressive" Talmud Torah (one where the teaching was in Hebrew rather than Yiddish or English), and as an occasional substitute in a yeshiva. Both my brother and I attended Papa's Talmud Torah weekdays after public school.

What I chiefly remembered of my father was that he had been keen on my education. When I learned how to read, he brought home a primer which he had picked up at the yeshiva, where the public-school curriculum was followed in the morning. He also personally escorted me to the neighborhood library and asked that I be issued a children's card. (He was turned down—I was too young for a card.) Later, when I did well at the Talmud Torah, my father made a fitful attempt to teach me the Book of Amos at home. He tried to sweeten this extramural study with a dime for each session; but when he saw that I was really not interested and preferred to play, he dropped the whole matter. (I have never had a good head for business. My big brother earned a first-baseman's mitt by humoring Papa in this way.)

In addition to his other labors, my father prepared boys privately for bar mitzvah (this was in the dinosaur age, before bat mitzvah for girls). So Papa came home late every evening, and I rarely saw him before going off to sleep.

Many years later, I came across a book of Yiddish poems by the popular Morris Rosenfeld. It had a crude jacket showing a bloated capitalist literally sucking the blood of an emaciated worker through a pipe inserted into the worker's belly button. One of the poems particularly

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caught my fancy. It was the heartbreaking lament of an exploited sweatshop worker bemoaning his lot. He cried that he left home at the crack of dawn before the children awoke, and did not return until late at night. He got to see his dear little ones only when they were asleep. And *they* never saw *him.*

Reading this poem, I used to think that my own hardworking father had been in the same situation. But nowadays I wonder whether his was not a self-imposed drudgery, whether Papa was a driven workaholic, and whether he really *preferred* to be away from home (my mother and he, I later learned, had not been compatible).

WHEN the *shiva*—the week of home mourning—was over, my knowledgeable big brother told me that we two were expected to say Kaddish three times a day for a year—morning, afternoon, and evening. I was taken aback. Three times a day? For a whole year? In a prayerhouse, a *shul,* where there was the required *minyan,* or quorum?

Still, though timid and easily frightened, I was curious about this novel experience. (I loved adventure stories.) So early the next morning, before going off to public school, I turned up at a neighborhood storefront *shul.* It was not too bad. My able and assertive big brother was with me; he was glad to show me the ropes: when to stand, when to sit, when to say the Kaddish. Under my brother's tutelage all went well that morning. But the next day my troubles began.

My mother was a modest woman, but she enjoyed showing a kind of modern-woman superiority. She liked to say that she was *frum* but not *meshugah frum,* pious but not crazy pious (like certain unnamed persons). As such, she could not see why her younger orphan son should have to rise early in the morning for Kaddish. Kaddish twice a day would be enough.

It was—and still is—the custom for afternoon and evening prayers to be recited consecutively, just before and after sunset. In those days, this was an excellent practical compromise that saved garment workers the time and expense of leaving work in the afternoon and being docked for the time they were away from their sewing machines and cutting tables. It also meant that to say Kaddish twice I would only have to show up in *shul* once, in the late afternoon.

And so, on the second day, skipping the morning service, I presented myself alone at the *shul* in time for the afternoon and evening prayers (my busy brother said his Kaddish elsewhere in the city). I had been too unsettled the day before to see the *shul* clearly. Now I took it in and was aghast. It was dingy, and had not been painted in a long time. The only books were enormous, dog-eared copies of the Talmud over which ancient, feeble men were arguing in hoarse, shrill, perplexed voices. They looked up when I came in, then, suddenly, realizing that I was a prospective Kaddish sayer, turned silent. It was time for prayers. Someone banged on the lectern: "*Minhah!*" The afternoon prayers began. There was no leader. It was every man for himself.

I located a *siddur,* or prayer book, and hurriedly found the place. But the oldsters read so fast, garbling prayers they knew by heart, that I was soon at sea. I could make out the initial word of each prayer as it was shouted aloud, but I soon fell behind.

Oddly enough, though a faithful Talmud Torah student, I had never been to *shul,* had never read the prayers before. For my father had been an intellectual, a rationalist of the 19th-century Haskalah (Enlightenment) school. He was a Jew by culture, not by faith. My father may have found it necessary, as a professional Hebrew teacher, to go to *shul* on Saturdays, but he never bothered to take me with him. So I was quite unprepared to say Kaddish properly after him.

Soon the afternoon prayer came to its end. There was an expectant silence. People looked at me. Finally, the lectern was banged again: "Kaddish!" I said it.

The same thing happened at the end of the evening prayer. I, the young Talmud Torah student, kept falling behind the speedy veterans. Indeed, I never did manage to orient myself properly to the order of the prayers, and had to wait until I was a student at a college of Jewish studies to learn the method in this apparently inchoate madness.

And yet (this is most strange), even in the throes of my youthful travails, I *enjoyed* saying the Kaddish—and still do, despite the prayer's association with my father's unexpected death, and with that dusty *shul* which to my childish mind was the bastion of traditional senility.

THE New Testament says somewhere that in the midst of life we are in death. I was good at languages; the Kaddish is a mixture of Aramaic and Hebrew. Was reading a prayer for the dead in a partly foreign language the equivalent of being in life in the midst of death (language being the core of my life)?

Is that too far-fetched? I remember clearly my delight in deciphering Hebrew components in the Aramaic of the Kaddish: e.g., the Hebrew *malkhut* (kingdom) in the Aramaic *malkhuta.* I was not terribly (or consciously) interested in the memorable hallowing of God's name that is the purpose of the Kaddish. I liked the *sound* of the words, but was indifferent to their connotations for faith.

Is that still the case—or was it *entirely* the case even then?

Or do I recite the Kaddish with such enthusiasm for reasons which I know not of? W.H. Auden has a wonderful line that I am fond of repeating (to myself and others): "We are lived by forces we pretend to understand" (it is from his poem in memory of Ernst Toller, the German-Jewish poet

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who committed suicide in New York during World War II). The key word, I keep telling people, is "lived."

Is the Kaddish a force that still *lives* me? I feel in my bones the truth of that striking phrase. But what does it mean exactly—or even inexactly? What does it have to do with my compulsion to say Kaddish? What force *wills* me to do it?

I never did say the Kaddish for a full year, in the traditional fashion. My father died in the spring; in the summer, I was sent to camp. When camp was over, I simply did not go back to that horrendous *shul.*

But I have said the Kaddish as a memorial prayer many times in the course of the years—more and more often of late, as people I cared for have gone the way of all flesh, or, in the fine biblical phrase, have gone to "sleep with their fathers." As I drive to my suburban Jewish community center where services are held, I keep wondering why I, who am so doubtful about the very existence of God, keep coming back to the Kaddish. Can it be the music of "the language of faith" that so stirs me?

Music? . . . I search my memory. Some five years ago, I copied into my commonplace book a passage from Goethe's table talk. He drew a close connection between music and worship:

> Music (like poetry) has an absolute power no one can explain. That is why music is indispensable for religious worship; it is one of the chief means of exercising miraculous influence on people.

I find it hard to admit that the Kaddish exerts a "miraculous influence" on me. I wonder whether the Sage of Weimar was not indulging in a mocking, deliberate grandiloquence. As a scientist, as well as a poet and dramatist and chancellor of the Duchy of Weimar, would he not have agreed (as I do) with the rabbis in the Midrash that the age of miracles ended with the Revelation at Sinai? Both he and they knew that miracles are not a daily occurrence in religious worship except (maybe) metaphorically. Goethe must have used the word "miraculous" the way we nowadays say "wonderful" (nothing religious or spiritual about it).

So, at any rate, I speculate. Nevertheless, I have myself been quite moved by gospel songs sung with deep devotion by ordinary people in central Tennessee—moved to the point of tears. And, at odd times, I also find myself singing (low and off-key—I have no ear) the opening words of the Kaddish.

I HAVE been talking *about* the Kaddish, in the abstract, so to speak. It is time to read it literally, in its own words, to get the true feel and sense of it.

Here is the translation of the Kaddish as printed in Nahum Glatzer's anthology of liturgical texts, *Language of Faith* (Schocken, 1967):

Mighty, hallowed be His great name,
in the world He has created according to His will.
May he establish His kingdom
in the days of your life,
and in the life of the whole house of Israel speedily.
Let us say, Amen.

May His great name be blessed unto all eternity.

Blessed and praised, honored, adored, and extolled, glorified and exalted
be the name of the Holy One, blessed be He.
He is high above all blessings and hymns, praises
and words of solace which are uttered throughout the world.
Let us say, Amen.

May there be abundant peace from heaven,
and life for us and for all Israel.
Let us say, Amen.

May He who makes peace on high
bring peace to us and to all Israel.
Let us say, Amen.

A scholarly footnote by Glatzer informs us that originally the Kaddish was a prayer for the coming of the kingdom of God, recited at the conclusion of a public study session, and that it only later developed into a part of the synagogal liturgy, being first mentioned around 600 C.E. The custom of reciting the Kaddish during the year of mourning for parents originated in medieval Germany. The central theme, "Let His great name be blessed," alludes to the book of Daniel in the Hebrew Bible, and to a passage in the Talmud. The Kaddish is also comparable to one of the most frequently recited prayers from the New Testament:

> After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy name. Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. [Matthew 7:9-10]

Clearly, the faithful among both Jews and Christians aspire to the establishment of God's dominion everywhere in the universe (though Jews no longer proselytize extensively—not since the 4th century, when the newly converted Christian emperor of Rome, Constantine, forbade their competing with Christians).

As for me, I am not a utopian by temperament. I can understand why so many people long for the world to be saved from the consequences of the human propensity to sin. But I suspect that humanity has not, will not, and cannot be redeemed, either tomorrow or at the end of days, by God, or man, or God in the shape of man. Perhaps this is simply a lack of imagination on my part. I admire, even envy, reformers and revolutionaries their enthusiasm, but I do not share millenarian hopes for the world. I shall be happy to be able to atone for my own *private* failings—that would be more than enough.

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So, though ardently to be desired, it is not the Kaddish's plea for the imminent ("in the days of your life") realization of the sanctity of the Divine, and with it "abundant peace from heaven," that makes the Kaddish so significant to me.

Yet, as I read the prayer carefully, and reread it in astonishment, two lines, entirely private and personal, strike me between the eyes. I am taken aback, and blink at their stark implication:

> He is high above all blessings and hymns, praises
> and words of solace which are uttered throughout the world.

Do I read this correctly? Why did those medieval German rabbis ordain that mourners repeat *this* prayer, with its reminder of God's superiority to human grief? To *humiliate* them? Whatever happened to the famous "consolations of religion"? Are we to be left only with the drastic "God's will be done," His remote mystery, the ineffable "His ways are not your ways"?

It seems that we are so to be left. And (who knows?) perhaps even as a child I may have recognized that the Kaddish, for all its magnificent music in a partly familiar, partly foreign language, was not meant to justify the apparently meaningless death of my father—or my own death in some remote time to come. Perhaps that is because death has no meaning. But isn't that what God is for? Isn't He the idea of meaning in the universe?

I was no metaphysician at the age of eleven. But I may well have connected the humiliation I felt at the hands of those old men in the *shul* who raced through the prayers, leaving me far behind, with the "meaningless" Kaddish I was required to say, a prayer that glorified God but ignored my dumb mourning.

HUMILIATION. . . . A few years ago I was struck by a powerful passage in the memoirs of Natan Sharansky. The Soviet-Jewish dissident says that he had learned an invaluable truth from the KGB's deliberate program to demean him. They had stripped him of his own clothing, cut off his connections with the outside world—letters, radio—beaten him, mocked him. He had almost succumbed to their classic tactics of dehumanization—until one day, from the depth of his despair, he had drawn a maxim that asserted his essential autonomy and gave him the strength to survive his ordeals: "No one can humiliate me but myself."

And now I begin to wonder whether in looking for every opportunity to say Kaddish I may not be defying the memory of the (admittedly self-inflicted) humiliation I assumed as a troubled child in an indifferent world of pathetic valetudinarians, that moribund world of rote and routine. Or perhaps it is that (as a stoical adult and not an angry child) I repeat the Kaddish time and again to confirm its hard truth: that "God is high above all words of solace."

For now, as a frequent mourner in the presence of death, I gratefully, even gladly, accept God's superiority to the all too common and completely understandable human plea for the "consolations of religion." Were not the well-intentioned explanations that Job's friends gave him for God's apparently meaningless hostility to the good and righteous Job a kind of deprecation, both of the suffering Job and of the God whose (incomprehensible) will was being done? For me, at any rate, death is death, mourning is mourning, both are inevitable, and there is no humiliation in yielding to God's inexorable will, however mysterious.

The biblical book of Leviticus puts it very well when it explains the reversion of land to the original owner during the jubilee year: "For the land is mine [God's], and you are but aliens who have become my tenants." So, with the Kaddish standing behind me, I can accept my jubilee tenancy on the earth. God is above solace for my mourning, and I am above the humiliation of being a perpetual tenant.

Thus I foresee that I shall be saying Kaddish for those I cared about for the rest of my life.

Yes, it may be merely the last stage of my preoccupation with my father's death, and with my own that is not so far off.

Yes, it may be a covert attempt at atonement for all the bad things I have done, or that have been done to me, by mistake or deliberation.

Yes, it may not be my own willed act at all, but the act of some subterranean force that lives in me of which I am completely unaware—the will of the force within me that is the true meaning of my life.

I accept, indeed embrace, all these explanations of why I keep saying the Kaddish with such ardor. Perhaps the first and simplest, the least rational and pretentious, is closest to the essence of my personality: I say Kaddish out of love of language, of the music of language, and of the language of faith.

I remain an agnostic, one who thinks that the existence of God can neither be proved nor disproved—though, in my case, devoutly to be wished. This is a paradox I have struggled with all my life—or at least since my father's death.

Sharansky, in the same autobiographical memoir, tells us that he was immeasurably strengthened during his imprisonment by a saying of a hasidic master, Rabbi Nahman of Bratslav, reverently known as "the Bratslaver": "This entire world is a very narrow bridge. The thing is not to be afraid."

Saying Kaddish for those I loved will, I hope, help me to cross that narrow bridge without too much fear.

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Society & Edith Wharton

Richard Grenier

In 1920, when *The Age of Innocence* was published, Edith Wharton stood at the pinnacle of her reputation as the most renowned writer of fiction in America, and also the most highly paid. An heir to a considerable personal fortune, maintaining at times as many as four grandiose homes with large staffs of servants, she also earned many millions from her writing. Publishers fought to have her. Her works were serialized, in the fashion of the times, in numerous leading magazines. Stage adaptations were made of her novels. Hollywood optioned many titles, and made some into films, first silent, then "talkies," which she never bothered to see.

Edith Wharton knew "everyone"—meaning many upper-class Englishmen, whom she adored, and French aristocrats and literary figures, whom she adored even more; also, a fair number of Americans, almost all from the very best families. Her most prized literary friendship was with Henry James, whom she aided financially in his last years (he died in 1916). While writing diligently every morning, she kept up a frenetic social life. From 1907 on, her principal domicile was Paris.

In Paris in those years distinguished salons were maintained by two celebrated American woman writers: Edith Wharton and Gertrude Stein. But the two women never met, and their salons did not overlap in the slightest. Gertrude Stein's favorite artists, such as Picasso, Matisse, and Braque—in short, the modernists—Mrs. Wharton apparently considered riffraff, while her own favorite painters have long since been forgotten. Mrs. Wharton despised T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land*, and she had a very low opinion of James Joyce's *Ulysses*, which she thought "unformed & unimportant drivel." Among American writers, she manifested no interest whatsoever in Ernest Hemingway, William Faulkner, or John Dos Passos; she once had F. Scott Fitzgerald to tea and pronounced him, in her diary, "awful." As for Gertrude Stein herself, Edith Wharton did not like lesbians, nor, with a few carefully chosen exceptions (Bernard Berenson), was she inordinately fond of Jews.

Indeed, at the time Edith Wharton wrote *The Age of Innocence*, she was in the throes of an overwhelming hostility toward almost everything American. She had always denigrated one thing or another about the United States, but in the period immediately following World War I she really went overboard. "I am humiliated to the soul at being what is now known as an 'American,'" she wrote. "All that I thought American in a true sense is gone, and I see nothing but vainglory, crassness, and total ignorance—which of course is the core of the whole evil." She was appalled, particularly after the opening of Woodrow Wilson's Versailles Peace Conference, by the hordes of Americans swarming over Paris (although they were far fewer in number and certainly of a higher social class than those who were to swarm in later generations). She was, she said, becoming acquainted with the "new American cad."

It was partly the presence of these distasteful Americans that turned her against even her beloved Paris and drove her from her grand apartment in the aristocratic Faubourg Saint Germain to an even grander establishment some ten miles north of the city, a chateau which she had renovated at great expense and decorated to her demanding taste.

Yet an element of confusion in interpreting Edith Wharton's work is that she had a tendency to deride everything. (Early in their relationship, Henry James had warned her of her tendency to be "a little *hard*, a little purely derisive.") Thus, there is no question that, at the beginning, she wholeheartedly despised the aristocratic New York of the 1870's as narrow, hidebound, provincial, and, perhaps worst of all, philistine.

As the years went by, however, without abandoning her satirical tone in describing it, she began to see the New York of the 1870's—what she came to call "Old New York"—as somehow noble, certainly far loftier in its manners and mores than the New York of the "invaders," such trash as the Astors, Vanderbilts, Carnegies, and other families that came into full social splendor a few years after she made her own social debut in 1878.

In the last 25 years of her life Edith Wharton visited America exactly once, in 1923, to receive an honorary degree at Yale—the first woman to be so honored. Although she continued to write fiction situated in America, she had completely lost her command of the American vernacular. It was in this period, following the Great War, that in retrospect the "Old New York" of her girlhood came to be bathed in a golden glow. Enough of a glow, in fact, that in 1921 the trustees of Columbia University, overruling their own jury, took the Pulitzer Prize for literature away from Sinclair Lewis's *Main Street*, and bestowed it instead on Mrs. Wharton's *The Age of Innocence*. For Lewis's portrait of the complacency, narrow-mind-

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edness, and hypocrisy of small-town America had given much offense, and in those days the Pulitzer was explicitly reserved for "the American novel which shall best present the wholesome atmosphere of American life and the highest standard of American manners and manhood."

Was *The Age of Innocence* that novel? Yes, and no.

THE event which launches *The Age of Innocence*—both the novel and the remarkably faithful movie version that Martin Scorsese has now made of it—is the meeting of young Newland Archer (played in the film by Daniel Day-Lewis), symbol of Mrs. Wharton's "Old New York," and Countess Ellen Olenska (Michelle Pfeiffer), the Europeanized American beauty with whom Archer later falls madly in love. Countess Olenska, though born into the same provincial New York as Newland Archer—and Edith Wharton—is a symbol of the sophisticated European society in which, again like Mrs. Wharton, she has spent much of her life.

Among her other cosmopolitan vagaries, Madame Olenska has made a disastrous marriage to a dissolute Polish count, a bounder, cad, and rotter (to use Mrs. Wharton's language). She now wants to divorce him, but her stuffy New York family—the Mingotts—strongly disapproves. Respectable women in that age, of that class, did not divorce. Will "New York" (by which Mrs. Wharton always means the city's aristocratic families) even "receive" Countess Olenska? Will she be compelled to return to her despicable husband?

The film, like the novel, begins at the opera, where we meet the story's cast of characters, distributed carefully, box by box in the diamond horseshoe: great ladies, arbiters of good taste; well-groomed bachelors; young wastrels (male); gossips; hypocrites; and pure, dull maidens with a "hard, bright blindness" to the outside world and to all change. Among these insipid maidens is Archer's beloved, his betrothed, May Welland (Winona Ryder), from a family the carbon copy of his own. But the shocking event of the evening, observed by everyone through opera glasses, is the appearance beside Newland Archer's own fiancée of her now disreputable first cousin, Countess Olenska. A hushed voice is heard in the bachelors' box: "I didn't think the Mingotts would have tried it on!"

Soon after, at a grand party in one of the brownstone mansions of pre-skyscraper New York, Archer spies Countess Olenska. More significantly, Countess Olenska spies Archer. A rigorously adhered-to rule of the time was that a "lady," once seated in a drawing room, should modestly remain there, exchanging ceremonious badinage with whoever came to pay her tribute. But Countess Olenska rises and, to the collective dismay of the assemblage, strides boldly across the room to seat herself beside Archer. And then, at his departure, with no forewarning or previously issued invitation, she blurts out: "Tomorrow, then, after five—I shall expect you." Archer is stunned.

Archer works (in the most casual sense) as a lawyer, and he will in time be designated by his firm to explain to Countess Olenska that she must not divorce her cad of a husband. But on his first visit to her, he has not yet been given this mission. Countess Olenska receives him informally in an unconventionally decorated sitting room and speaks to him in an unaffected, straightforward manner he has never before encountered in a lady.

Countess Olenska seems to stand for everything Archer has always wanted from life but never gotten: freedom from his restrictive social world, the wild and intoxicating life of far-off lands, love. He tells her with some difficulty that everyone in New York wants to "help" her, and the Countess sighs. "I know," she says with a hint of bitterness. "But on condition that they don't hear anything unpleasant. The real loneliness is living among all these kind people who only ask one to pretend!" She lifts her hands to her face, her slim shoulders shaken by a sob. "Madame Olenska! Oh, don't, Ellen!" cries Archer, leaping forward and seizing one of her hands. On his way home, as he passes a florist shop, his eyes fall on a cluster of yellow roses and he first thinks (in the novel though not in the film) of sending them to his fiancée. But in their fiery beauty they are too rich and strong for May, and he orders them sent instead to Countess Olenska. The die is cast.

AS IT dawns on Archer that he is falling deeply in love with the Countess, he dashes down to Saint Augustine, Florida, where his fiancée and her family are "wintering," and begs her to hasten their upcoming marriage—to remove himself, as it were, from temptation. Sensing something wrong, May, rather nobly, tells him that if there is another woman, and he has "pledged" himself to her, he must fulfill his pledge and she will let him go. "Don't give her up because of me," she says gravely. Archer is so overwhelmed by May's generosity that he is more resolved than ever to marry her, and soon does so.

But the Countess Olenska problem refuses to go away. Married, Archer still yearns for her. He drives his horse and buggy to a country house near fashionable Newport, Rhode Island. She has left for Boston. He takes the train to Boston. He finds her sitting in Boston Common. On a restaurant terrace, with the Boston skyline hazy on the horizon, the tears stream down the Countess's cheeks and Archer realizes that she loves him. She will, she promises, stay in America; but their love must be pure. If he "lifts a finger" he will drive her back to her husband, the abominable Count Olenski.

Then Archer gets another chance. When Countess Olenska comes up to New York from Washington to visit her sick grandmother, he steals a march and meets her at Pennsylvania Station, at that time in romantic Jersey City. In a torrid moment, in their horse-drawn carriage, Archer sensually unbuttons one of her gloves, and later the Countess says, "Is it your idea, then, that I should live with you as your mistress?" Shocked by the word, Archer wonders if it has been used familiarly in the Countess's presence in the horrible life

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from which she has fled. He cries, "I want somehow to get away with you into a world where words like that—categories like that—won't exist, where we shall simply be two human beings who love each other, and nothing else on earth will matter!"

Countess Olenska sighs, then laughs:

> Oh, my dear—where is that country? Have you ever been there? I know so many who've tried to find it and, believe me, they all got out by mistake at wayside stations: at places like Boulogne, or Pisa, or Monte Carlo—and it wasn't at all different from the old world they'd left, but only rather smaller and dingier and more promiscuous.

"Then what exactly is your plan for us?" Archer asks stiffly. "For *us*?" she replies sharply. "There is no *us*! We're only Newland Archer, the husband of Ellen Olenska's cousin, and Ellen Olenska, the cousin of Newland Archer's wife, trying to be happy behind the backs of people who trust them!" But, later, she relents and promises to "come to him" for one night of love. Newland's wife, May, however, manages neatly to obstruct things once again by telling Countess Olenska, prematurely, that she is pregnant. The Countess, unwilling to take a pure-hearted American husband from his devoted, generous, pregnant wife, decides to rush back to decadent Europe.

THE film's next-to-last scene, exactly like the book's next-to-last chapter, is a grand gathering of "the Family" (which Edith Wharton spells with a capital F) for the first big dinner given by the newlywed Mr. and Mrs. Newland Archer, with gilt-edged menus and borrowed footmen—a farewell dinner for the Countess Olenska, about to depart for Europe. We hear Edith Wharton's words being read in voice-over (by the actress Joanne Woodward). Archer feels as if he is floating somewhere between the chandelier and the ceiling. It suddenly comes to him in a searing flash that all these fashionable, placid people delicately eating their canvasback ducks have believed for months that he and Countess Olenska are lovers, and that the whole tribe has rallied around his wife while pretending not to know anything. It is Old New York's way of taking life without bloodshed: "the way of people who dreaded scandal more than disease, who placed decency above courage, and who considered that nothing was more ill-bred than 'scenes' except the behavior of those who gave rise to them."

Feeling himself a "prisoner in an armed camp," Archer understands that a conspiracy of rehabilitation and obliteration is under way. The silent organization which holds this fashionable world together is also determined to put itself on record as never for a minute having questioned the propriety of Countess Olenska's conduct, or the completeness of Archer's own domestic felicity. He catches in his wife's eyes the "glitter of victory" and—for the first time—realizes that she too thinks he is the Countess's lover.

In moments he is putting Countess Olenska's cloak about her shoulders. She calmly holds out her hand with a composed "Goodbye." "But I shall see you soon in Paris!" he almost hears himself shout. "Oh," the Countess smiles, "if you and *May* could come. . . ." In the billowy darkness inside the landau, Archer catches the dim oval of her face, eyes shining steadily—and she's gone. He has missed "the flower of life." The love affair is over.

AN EPILOGUE is set 26 years later. Newland Archer, now fifty-seven, is a leading if sedate citizen of New York and a good friend of Governor Theodore Roosevelt (as was Edith Wharton). He has been a faithful husband but is now a widower, his wife May having died of infectious pneumonia, contracted while nursing back to health one of their three children. Their long years together had shown him that "it did not so much matter if marriage was a dull duty, as long as it kept the dignity of a duty. He honored his own past, and mourned for it. After all, there was good in the old ways." He remembers May, his wife: generous, faithful, unwearied, if entirely lacking in imagination, incapable of growth. Her "hard bright blindness" had kept her horizon forever unaltered. Yet at her death he sincerely mourned her.

Archer and his architect son take a trip to Paris and are invited to visit Countess Olenska, who never went back to her husband, now dead. Nor has the glamorous Countess remarried. There is nothing now to keep her and Archer apart. They are both single, and he is to see her in only hours. Archer finds himself saying, "But I'm only fifty-seven. . . ." Although it is too late now for "summer dreams," perhaps it is not too late for a "quiet harvest of friendship, of comradeship, in the blessed hush of her nearness."

Archer and his son walk to Countess Olenska's apartment in the fashionable Hôtel des Invalides district. Archer thinks of the theaters the Countess must have been to, the paintings she must have seen, the splendid houses she must have frequented, the fascinating people she must have talked with, the "incessant stir of ideas, curiosities, images, and associations thrown out by an intensely social race in a setting of immemorial manners." Half a lifetime divides Archer from the Countess; during all that time, he has kept alive his youthful memory of her, but as for her, if she remembers him at all her memory must be like a relic in a small, dim, neglected chapel. As Archer and his son arrive in front of the Countess's apartment, the father is overwhelmed by what his son has just told him: that, before she died, May confessed she had always known Archer had given up, for her and their family, what he wanted most in life. That his wife should have understood him all along, should actually have pitied him, moves Archer "indescribably." He feels as if "an iron band" has been lifted from his heart.

The son goes up to meet the legendary Countess, while Archer remains seated on a bench in the square, trying to imagine the scene above. He remains rooted to the bench in the gathering dusk, his eyes fixed on her windows. In the novel, Archer hears himself say, "It's more real to me here than if I

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went up." This line is not heard in the film, but instead we suddenly see Countess Olenska fill the screen as Archer pictures her in his mind: still young, gloriously beautiful, in her white dress at Newport, turning and smiling at him. He has done his duty, Archer reflects somberly, but knows he has missed the flower of life. He rises slowly and walks back alone to his hotel.

ALTHOUGH Scorsese's film version of *The Age of Innocence* is scrupulously faithful, gone from it are the elaborate descriptions of household interiors that are a staple of all Edith Wharton's works and that have led some critics to call her "the poet of interior decoration."

Gone also, inevitably, is Mrs. Wharton's predilection for defining her characters by their material possessions. Thus, in the novel, we are meant to feel the attraction of Countess Olenska by her "small slender tables of dark wood, a delicate little Greek bronze in the chimney piece, and a stretch of red damask nailed on the discolored wallpaper behind a couple of Italian-looking pictures in old frames." We learn that the Countess has two Jacqueminot roses in a slender vase, and that her tea is served "with two handleless Japanese cups and little covered dishes." A character who has been eliminated from the screenplay is the young Countess's eccentric aunt, who brought her up in Europe after the death of her parents and appears in New York "in a wild dishevelment of stripes and fringes and floating scarves."

Mrs. Wharton makes quite a point of her contention that in the 1870's, before the ostentatious *nouveaux riches* "invaders" came to dominate New York society, a certain old-fashioned tackiness was the accepted social rule, and to follow too rapidly the latest ladies' fashions from Paris was thought to be vulgar. Thus, New York's Academy of Music, where the novel's opening scene takes place, is described as having shabby red and gold boxes, and the grandest New York ladies of the period, although they order the latest dresses from Paris promptly enough, are reported as leaving them to "mellow" in their delivery boxes for some two years, after which it becomes proper and in good taste to wear them. Most such satirical comments from the novel are gone from the film—although a few are preserved in the voice-over passages read by Joanne Woodward. In general, the novel's decor has been decidedly upgraded, with wardrobes, grand homes, and even the opera house being of the utmost luxury and opulence.

Nevertheless, most of Edith Wharton's attitudes are conveyed, and the heart of *The Age of Innocence* is present almost in full: the love story between Newland Archer and Countess Olenska with all its ins and outs, and a nearly complete cast of characters, including May Welland's entire family, Archer's entire family, several other "prominent" families, a complement of wits and dandies, and an obnoxious upstart financier named Julius Beaufort, who Mrs. Wharton denied was supposed to be a Jew (but who has been assumed to represent the age's celebrated Jewish financier, August Belmont). The older members of New York society are played by an excellent cast of largely British actors—this in accordance with Edith Wharton's reiterated insistence that in her period such people spoke with purely English accents. Fortunately, Newland Archer, Countess Olenska, and most of the younger members of the cast sound American.

SHOULD Newland Archer have run off with Countess Olenska? Martin Scorsese sticks with Edith Wharton, and has emphasized in interviews that he has done his level best to "follow the book." He is prepared to accept her judgment. But what is her judgment?

This, as it happens, is a matter of some dispute. The Columbia trustees, in overruling the Pulitzer Prize jury in 1921, doubtless thought that Newland Archer had done the "wholesome" thing. But in the next decade, the influential critic Edmund Wilson rushed forward to contest that view. *The Age of Innocence*, Wilson insisted, conveys an "active resentment against the pusillanimity" of provincial New York, as well as a special complaint against the "timid American male"—Newland Archer—"who has let the lady down." According to Wilson, it was the "last irony" of *The Age of Innocence* that Newland Archer should become reconciled to the stifling moral values of Old New York.

Similarly today, watching the new film and quite in its grip, the novelist John Updike reported (in the *New Yorker*) feeling a distinct uncertainty as to how it was going to turn out:

> There was, for me, a momentary ambiguity at the end of Scorsese's film. . . . It seemed possible that Hollywood might exercise its prerogative and . . . have Archer do what any red-blooded widower would do, that is, take the *ascenseur*, give his hostess a hug, and spend the rest of his life with Michelle Pfeiffer.

But Updike went further. Even in Edith Wharton's novel, he wrote, Archer seems "merely perverse." And he asked, "In reworking Wharton, how tied should the workers be to the cruel overseer within her who denied her characters happiness after bringing them tantalizingly close to it?"

In his Pulitzer Prize-winning biography of Edith Wharton (1985), R.W.B. Lewis of Yale gives a direct rebuttal to all such "romantic" readings of Mrs. Wharton. For her, writes Lewis, "there was no genuine and honorable and emotionally fufilling alternative to the social order. . . . Society was the domain of the values that counted most—loyalty, decency, honesty, fidelity, and the adherence to moral commitment."

For all Edith Wharton's ambivalence about Old New York, the weight of evidence is on Lewis's side. In fact, in the preliminary outline for *The Age of Innocence* which Mrs. Wharton sent to her American publishers (under the working title *Old New York*), her hero, Archer, does indeed run off with Countess Olenska—and the venture ends in failure. The two "meet in Florida where they spend a few mad weeks," after which Archer remorsefully returns to his

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wife and conventional life in New York, and Countess Olenska to Paris. In further outlines, Mrs. Wharton even had Archer break his engagement to May Welland and actually marry Ellen Olenska, but that too fails to work out. So, in Mrs. Wharton's eyes, whether Newland Archer could find happiness with Countess Olenska was not an open question.

ONE does not need to describe Mrs. Wharton's moral standards in quite the glowing terms used by R.W.B. Lewis to appreciate that in her work no feverish dashing-off to find romance somewhere over the horizon, or illicit passion of any sort, ever brings happiness. This is even true of an unpublished erotic story, "Beatrice Palmato," which she composed at about the same time she was writing *The Age of Innocence*. Mrs. Wharton was quite proud of this highly explicit work, and boasted about it to her friends. Yet it, too, is shot through with darkness. Beatrice's older sister, who has earlier been seduced by their "half-Levantine" father, kills herself; their mother goes insane, tries to kill her husband, and dies in a lunatic asylum; and the eponymous Beatrice, who has been been having regular sexual relations with her father from the age of twelve, also kills herself.

It was only in the half-finished *The Buccaneers* that Edith Wharton planned to have her social-climbing American heiress, Nan St. George, run off with a former officer of the Guards and find true happiness—in South Africa. As she declared cheerfully in her outline for the unwritten final passages of *The Buccaneers*, she meant, perhaps for the first time in her career, to show the triumph of "love, deep and abiding love." And this is just what the novel does in the version completed for Mrs. Wharton and just published, with highly feminist, upbeat alterations, by Marion Mainwaring.* Yet one wonders, given Mrs. Wharton's acidulous temperament, and, especially, the way she altered her plan for *The Age of Innocence*, if this "deep and abiding love" would indeed have found fruition had she finished the novel herself.

Perhaps the last word on this matter should be given to the novelist Louis Auchincloss, himself a (much later) product of the New York aristocratic world and one who is generally quite critical of Mrs. Wharton's "grotesque" (his word) caricatures of American life. To Auchincloss, *The Age of Innocence* expresses a "sense of apology" for the contempt in which Edith Wharton had held the New York of her early years. This book, writes Auchincloss, conveys absolutely no feeling that, in giving up the dream of love, "Archer has condemned himself and the Countess to an unrewarding life of frustration. The author is absorbed in the beauty of rules and forms even when they stamp out spontaneity." In the novel, Countess Olenska tells Archer: "It was you who made me understand that under the dullness there are things so fine and sensitive and delicate that even those I most cared for in my other life look cheap in comparison." Auchincloss glosses: "This is the climax of the message: that under the thick glass of convention blooms the fine, fragile flower of patient suffering and denial. To drop out of society is as vulgar as to predominate; one must endure and properly smile."

HENRY JAMES, the most distinguished of Edith Wharton's American literary friends, wrote of her work: "We move in an air purged at a stroke of the old sentimental and romantic values." Many years later, as if mindful of Mrs. Wharton's challenge to these values, W.H. Auden was to write: "About three-quarters of modern literature is concerned with one subject, the love between a man and a woman, and assumes that falling in love is the most important and valuable experience that can happen to a human being."

If there is a significant difference between Edith Wharton's *The Age of Innocence* and Martin Scorsese's extraordinary movie, it stems from the fact that, for all the feminist lectures we have had to endure on the virtues of seeking fulfillment outside of man-woman "relationships," our disposition toward romantic love is still so powerful that it tends to condition our expectations of any narrative art—perhaps above all our expectations of movies. Through the remarkable performances of Michelle Pfeiffer and Daniel Day-Lewis, *The Age of Innocence*, on screen, builds a romantic momentum that seems absolutely to demand fulfillment.

But it was never Edith Wharton's intention to provide this fulfillment. She herself had a conventional, virtually sexless, and certainly passionless marriage to the neurotic socialite Teddy Wharton. Her one experience with fierce, passionate love occurred ten years before she was to write *The Age of Innocence*, and that it was a humiliating episode her abject letters to her lover now bear witness. With Edith Wharton, love never conquers all. Society's moral conventions conquer all.

Whether or not this is an uplifting process to contemplate, Martin Scorsese leaves it up to the spectator to decide. For Scorsese, who almost alone among American directors has concerned himself with moral dilemmas within tight social groups (most famously, of course, the Mafia), and with the equivocal demands of order, tradition, respect, loyalty, and the fulfilling of commitments, understands this difficult truth about Edith Wharton, and honors it to the letter.

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* Viking, 406 pp., $22.00.

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Breakdown

LENIN'S TOMB: RUSSIA AND THE FALL OF COMMUNISM. By DAVID REMNICK. *Random House. 576 pp. $25.00.*

Reviewed by RICHARD PIPES

THE collapse of the Soviet Union and its empire will occupy historians and political theorists for years to come. The very suddenness and the nonviolent course of an event desired by many but foreseen by none are bound to raise questions about the standards used by academics to estimate the viability of states. For it was virtually axiomatic among so-called Sovietologists that the Communist regimes in Russia and Eastern Europe were stable and had the capacity, by a combination of repression and concessions, to repel any internal challenges. Proceeding from this premise, many Sovietologists urged a policy of accommodation with the Communist bloc on the grounds that, whereas confrontation was futile, an enhanced sense of security would induce Communist authorities to relax their grip and eventually to shift toward democracy.

To anyone acquainted with Russian history, this line of reasoning had a familiar ring. It restated, in contemporary academic jargon, the old argument of the Mensheviks, or moderate social democrats, after the Bolshevik seizure of power. Much as they criticized the Communists, the Mensheviks were against countering Bolshevik force with force. They opposed the anti-Bolshevik White movement and sided with the Reds in the Civil War; they similarly rejected any foreign intervention in Russian affairs. From October 1917 onward, they placed their faith in the gradual evolution of the Soviet system, in their eyes a corrupt version of a progressive socialist movement which, if left alone, was bound, sooner or later, to "evolve" in the right direction. Confrontation, on the other hand, would frighten the Communists and compel them to perpetuate their coercive methods.

No such evolution took place; the system was of a piece. As was predicted by some conservative Russians as early as the 1920's, it could either stand or fall, but not change. Its seeming stability was a sham made plausible by unprecedented controls over expressions of opinion. The rigidity which enabled it to withstand internal and external assaults precluded peaceful evolution. In the end, Communism was brought down by the willingness of the West, especially the United States, to engage in protracted confrontation, which in the 1980's under Ronald Reagan led Washington openly to question the legitimacy of the Soviet government.

The founders of the Soviet state had gambled on two developments, neither of which occurred: the spread of the revolution from Russia to the industrial countries of the West, and the emergence in the realm under their control of a new breed of human beings, free of the craving for freedom and the acquisitive spirit. The failure of these expectations deprived Communism of its *raison d'être.* A regime was produced that within a few years of its founding had no other purpose than to perpetuate itself in order to safeguard the privileges of its ruling class: a regime that, in David Remnick's words, was run by "the most gigantic mafia the world has ever known."

Such a system, by virtue of its absolute power, could carry out impressive crash programs, especially in the field of military procurement. But it could neither win the loyalty of the population nor harness its full potential. It suffered from a slow but unstoppable erosion of morale and productivity which in the 1980's came to confront its leadership with two equally unpalatable alternatives: steady regression, with the attendant risk of decline to the rank of a second-rate power, or reform, with its threat of destabilization. The leadership procrastinated as long as it could: and when it finally ventured on reform, the whole rotten structure promptly collapsed in a heap.

THE great merit of David Remnick's book is to bring to life the agony of the Communist regime during the critical period of unsuccessful reform. This Remnick accomplishes not by theorizing, not by seeing events in "broad perspective," but by depicting, in vivid portraits, the minds and souls of those whose actions determined the outcome: courageous dissidents as well as the regime's conservative defenders, alongside passive and generally bewildered ordinary citizens.

Remnick, who spent four years in Moscow as a correspondent for the *Washington Post,* employed his time there by pursuing with indefatigable energy every person of importance and making certain to be present wherever there was any significant action. Apart from the many nameless Russians whose opinions he solicited, the list of persons he interviewed in what was then the Soviet Union, as well as in the West, covers six printed pages. The result is a highly informative as well as lively account of Communism's breakdown by an eyewitness who, without hiding his aversion for the Communist regime and its apologists, succeeds in maintaining throughout the attitude of a professional journalist.

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The publishers of Remnick's book, apparently meaning to enhance its appeal, call *Lenin's Tomb* a "historical bookend" to John Reed's paean to October 1917, *Ten Days That Shook the World*. This comparison is unfair to Remnick. Reed, a Communist fellow-traveler, knew neither Russia nor the Russian language. A romantic in search of high adventure, he treated the events in the midst of which he happened to find himself as a gigantic spectacle in which the forces of good, represented by the Bolsheviks, battled the forces of evil, represented by everyone else. For his effort he received Lenin's endorsement and—as has become recently known—one million rubles from the treasury of the Communist International.

Remnick, by contrast, has studied Russian history and speaks Russian. He has gone out of his way to depict the drama in terms of human perceptions and aspirations. Both in 1917, when the new regime was born, and in 1991-93, when it died, these were far more complex than suggested by Reed's cardboard protagonists. Whereas Reed's book retains value mainly as an example of a successful propaganda work, Remnick's is a reliable primary source which future historians are certain to consult and quote.

The account, which begins in the late 1980's, culminates in the abortive putsch of August 1991 and the subsequent trial of the Communist party. The reader can only regret that Remnick, at present on the staff of the *New Yorker*, was not in Moscow early in October 1993 when the process he so ably describes had its denouement.

What Remnick's face-to-face interviews reveal—and what so many Sovietologists, in their endeavor to be "scientific," consistently missed—is the immense variety of the motives that inspired the people living under Communism. By the very excessiveness of its demands, which required citizens to sacrifice all but their most banal personal wants to the state, the totalitarian regime could never gain their complete loyalty. Even the most dedicated Communists retained a sphere of personal autonomy which enabled them, once the system began to unravel, to break loose. At the same time, however, the vast majority, made up of some active and many passive opponents, could not entirely escape the regime's hold: wishing to preserve its positive features, they could never quite make a clean break with it.

One of the numerous figures making an appearance in the pages of Remnick's book is Aleksandr Yakovlev, who experienced the painful transition from being a prominent Communist ideologist and propagandist to providing, as adviser to Mikhail Gorbachev, the theoretical justification of Communism's destruction. What extraordinary psychological processes must have taken place in this remarkable man to account for such an evolution!

And then there is Nina Andreeva, an obscure chemistry teacher from Leningrad who remained true to the old faith and whose sensational newspaper article of 1988, encouraged by Gorbachev's conservative opponents, seemed to herald the return of Stalinism. Remnick interviews her and finds not a monster but a woman worried about the spread of anarchy and the demoralization of youth, frightened by Jews, convinced that if it were not for Stalin and collectivization Russia would have been destroyed by the Nazis. She also happens to be an excellent cook. Not an attractive individual but a credible one.

There is also Iurii Afanasev, a historian who showed admirable courage in criticizing the regime when it was dangerous to do so and yet managed to secure an important post in its archival administration. This man, despite his impeccable record as an anti-Stalinist, once confided to me that all Russians, himself included, harbored in their souls a residue of Stalinism.

THE picture that emerges from such personal contacts and observations is neither black nor white, but composed of innumerable shadings of gray, in which ideological commitment and self-interest are nuanced by personality traits. The battle for and against Communism was fought and decided in the hearts and minds of living human beings whom the abstract categories of political theory can hardly hope to encompass.

Of course, from the point of view of social and political science, an account like Remnick's must appear amateurish and "unscientific." Why is it, then, that it not only reads better but provides a better understanding of how and why the USSR collapsed than the turgid volumes churned out by the profession with generous subsidies from the government and foundations? The question touches on our very ability to apprehend political and social reality—whether the abstractions with which science of necessity operates are capable of grasping human phenomena made up of countless individual opinions and actions. Remnick's excellent book suggests that, in addition to thoroughgoing knowledge, there is no better guide to the understanding of human affairs than trusting one's eyes and ears.

The Bushies

HELL OF A RIDE: BACKSTAGE AT THE WHITE HOUSE FOLLIES 1989-1993. By JOHN PODHORETZ. *Simon & Schuster. 249 pp. $21.00.*

Reviewed by SUZANNE GARMENT

THERE is no point trying to be solemn about *Hell of a Ride*. It is a very funny book about the political demise of President George Bush and his administration, and to opine at length on its implications for the future of democratic governance would only make one sound like the most pompous of the fools whom John Podhoretz skewers here.

Podhoretz is, of course, the son of COMMENTARY's editor-in-chief. Moreover, many of the characters in the book are friends, acquaintances, or ideological antagonists

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of this reviewer. The whole arrangement thus amounts to a civil-service reformer's nightmare of putative bias and conflict of interest; which adds to the pleasure of the task.

Hell of a Ride is serious and comic by turns. Half the chapters are more or less chronological, taking the reader from the end of the Gulf war in 1991, when President Bush's popular-approval rating stood at a seemingly invincible 91 percent, to his humiliating defeat a mere year-and-a-half later in the election of 1992. More originally, Podhoretz alternates these chapters with eight "Freeze Frames," as he calls them, each written from a point of view inside the head of a slightly disguised Bush staffer. Some of these relatively junior staffers he interviewed, while others were friends who had been confiding in him and/or crying on his shoulder as they watched Bush slipping and their own future prospects growing dimmer and dimmer. (Podhoretz himself, though he had been a speechwriter in the Reagan White House, and served on the staff of William J. Bennett when the latter was Bush's drug czar, never worked directly for Bush.)

The serious part of the book is illuminating. Podhoretz, with great vividness, describes a White House that was, in part, like every other White House. Lower-ranking officials felt privileged to be inside the charmed political circle but were keenly aware of how far they sat from the true centers of influence. Junior staffers, insulated from the political mood of the country as a whole, occupied their time waging their bosses' power struggles. Instead of sharing information about what was going on, they used what they knew as weaponry in the bureaucratic wars. As for the "ideas" people, such as the speechwriters, they were locked in poisonous combat with other officials who believed that not words but money, media, and organization were the keys to politics.

All that sounds familiar enough. But, in Podhoretz's telling, the Bush White House was, in several important ways, very different from the operations run by other Presidents, and especially by Bush's predecessor, Ronald Reagan.

The few Reaganites who remained on the Bush senior staff were there because they had long-standing personal connections to the new President. A larger part of the staff was composed of protégés of Bush's many friends and congressional allies. Most numerous of all were ex-Bush campaign workers.

These "Bushies" were by no means the same human types as their Reaganite counterparts. In particular, they were not an ideological band of brothers; as one Bush official famously remarked, "Our people don't have ideology; they have mortgages." As a result, Podhoretz says, the Bush White House was swamped by mediocrity.

The Bush White House was also more tightly run than Reagan's. Bush hated leaks passionately; he fought them partly by allowing very few officials into the decision-mak-

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ing loop. When a leak did occur, there would be a systematic hunt for it. Naturally, the flow of unauthorized information soon slowed to a trickle.

Bush thereby missed the chance to test reactions to his policies on an informal basis before they became graven in official stone. The lack of advance warning also made it hard to get press coverage for policies when they did emerge from the White House.

Even worse than this airlessness, in Podhoretz's view, was that no one in the administration, including the President himself, had a clue to the role of ideas and popular leadership in building and sustaining presidential power.

After the Gulf war, the then-chief of staff, John Sununu, refused to put the President's popularity to use in the service of conservative policies. As the economy worsened, administration officials like Jack Kemp, Bush's HUD Secretary, wanted to challenge Congress to pass "growth legislation," but the President had a real distaste for Kemp and other idea-driven political figures.

Bush not only hated ideological enthusiasm but, in Podhoretz's account, had no ideological center himself. One result of this emptiness was to make the White House decision process excruciatingly lengthy. When, for instance, the state of Oregon asked for a Medicaid waiver in order to test a health plan that would have refused care to some high-risk patients, the staff argued about it for months. No one seemed to know, or to think it pertinent to find out, what Bush himself thought on the subject.

Then, inevitably, it came time to rev up Bush's reelection effort. Presidential pollster Robert Teeter gave the speechwriters a campaign chart, which included a box labeled "Theme/Slogan/Name." There was nothing written in the box; the hitherto-despised speechwriters were supposed to fill it in. But it was much too late.

As THEY haplessly muse upon their fate, the Bushies in Podhoretz's "Freeze Frames" manage to keep their sense of the ironic and the bizarre. "You," one of them says to himself resignedly, "were born Republican in the same way as you were born Caucasian." About his first meeting with George Bush, this staffer recalls nostalgically, "His face lit up when he heard your grandmother's name." Another of Podhoretz's overworked and underslept White House aides describes what it feels like to be "a casual visitor to your own private life." Yet another brings us greetings from Houston in 1992, "the first fully cellular convention," where one operative, surrounded by the din of the Republican convention floor and unable to get the attention of another staffer ten feet away, phones the guy, cellular to cellular, and tells him to turn around.

As might be expected, Podhoretz in this book has his friends and his enemies. But he is unexpectedly dispassionate in describing both. He tells how the Bushies worked to expunge Reaganism from the White House—but also notes that when Reaganites complained about Bush's treatment of the ex-President, they were in part using the Old Man as a cover for their own wounded pride.

Similarly, Podhoretz excoriates Bush's budget director, Richard Darman, for luring the President into a disastrous budget deal and for being personally abusive. "But," Podhoretz allows, "Darman was not evil. And he was one of the few people around who knew what they were doing." When it comes to John Sununu, Podhoretz blames him for much that went wrong in the Bush White House, but also says: "If you were good at your job and followed instructions, he was nice to you, and thoughtful." As Podhoretz pointedly remarks, the allegations of financial irregularity that drove Sununu from office were unfair even by the generally beastly standards of Washington.

And what of George Bush himself? Podhoretz portrays him as strangely solipsistic, unable to embrace any idea larger than himself even when his political life depended on it. Speaking to a crowd at the campaign's end, Bush mistakenly read aloud his stage directions: "Message: I care." In Podhoretz's telling, this embarrassment was wholly typical of Bush's ineptness in any but the most personal sort of politics. The President's notes and personal courtesies were "the truest and best side of his character"—but politically, Bush accomplished what even the Democrats could not: "delegitimating Reaganism in the eyes of the American people."

Podhoretz's book is of course not altogether fair. After all, Bush did provide a high-level home for Constance Horner, William Kristol, Richard Cheney, and a score of other officials of whom Podhoretz very much approves. So, too, Chase Untermeyer, the administration's first personnel director and a man whom Podhoretz calls the "ultimate Bushie," chose to move from the White House to head the Voice of America—that shrine to words—and did a very good job there.

More generally, so many factors worked to seal the fate of the Bush administration that we will never know upon whom or what to place the greatest blame. How much was due to the President's personal limitations? How much to the temporary exhaustion of a political idea after a decade of hard use, and a parallel exhaustion of enthusiasm and quality among Republicans? How much to a postwar national restlessness, of the type that once succeeded in driving even Winston Churchill from office?

Regimes that come to power on the flood tide of an idea bestow power and prestige on the makers of speeches; the regimes that follow them, which have the harder job of conserving a political legacy, confer power on technicians. Among the many limits of such conservators is their failure to understand that the scribblers always have the last word.

Still, Podhoretz did not set out to be fair. He set out first to show how working in the White House—any White House—looks from the inside, and then to give an accurate sense of what it was like to be in that place at one highly particular moment in American political history. He has done both, in spades, while delivering numerous laughs along the way.

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Clash of Civilizations

ISLAM AND THE WEST. By BERNARD LEWIS. *Oxford University Press. 217 pp. $25.00.*

ISLAM IN HISTORY: IDEAS, PEOPLE, AND EVENTS IN THE MIDDLE EAST. By BERNARD LEWIS. *Open Court. 487 pp. $59.95 cloth; $26.95 paper.*

Reviewed by LAURIE MYLROIE

"THE creation of Israel in 1948 affected the territory of five Middle Eastern nations—Palestine, Libya, Jordan, Egypt, and Syria. Israel became the source of terrorist opposition that radiated out from the Middle East."

So reads a new textbook, *Civilization and the West*, published by the prestigious firm of HarperCollins, written in the spirit of multiculturalism and diversity, and riddled with error. Seeking to explain the causes of Middle East terrorism, the authors discover them not in Arab opposition to Israel but in Israel itself; they invent a national entity—Palestine—complete with "territory," where no such entity existed in 1948; they write "Libya" where they clearly mean Lebanon; and they seem quite unaware that Jordan and Egypt *gained* territory in 1948, while the Syrian and Lebanese frontiers were little changed.

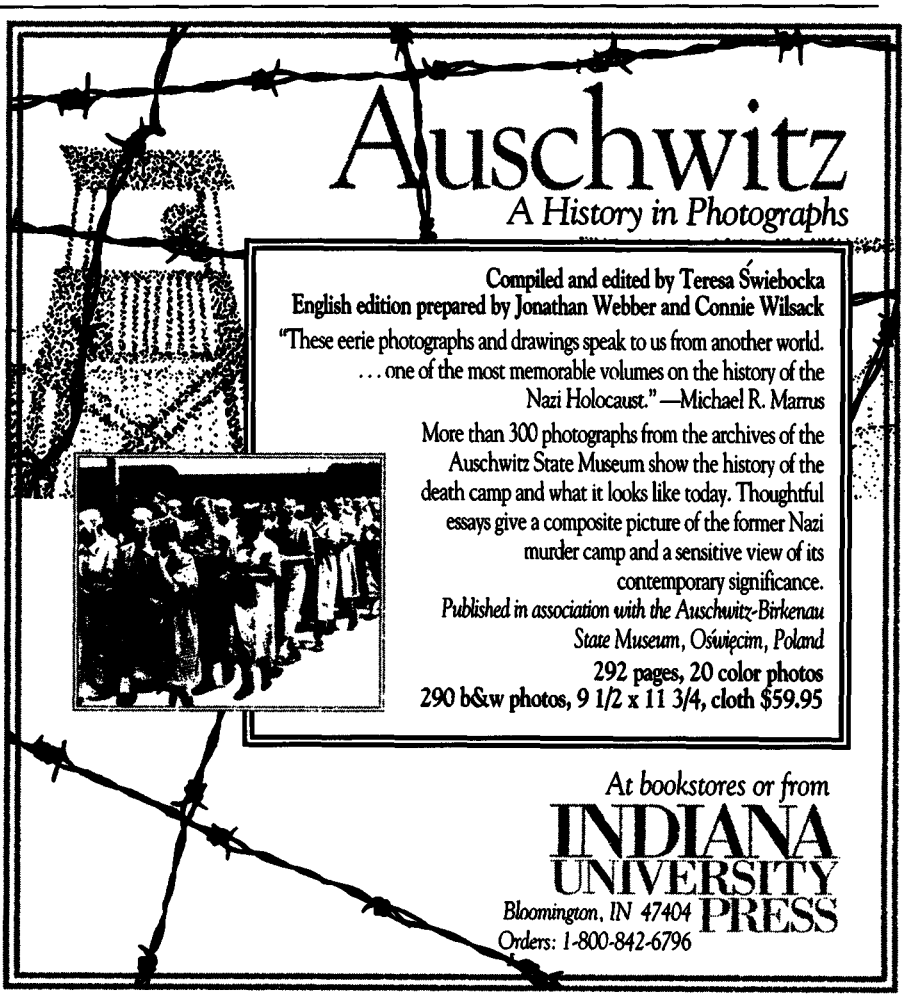
Western understanding of the Middle East, poor yesterday, remains poor today. That is one reason why students of the subject turn for relief and instruction to the writings of Bernard Lewis, perhaps the most distinguished living historian of Islam. Two volumes of Lewis's essays have recently appeared. *Islam and the West* is a new collection, focusing on the historical relationship between the two civilizations. *Islam in History*, first published twenty years ago, is a broader collection, now revised and expanded with thirteen new entries, some rescued from obscure publications. Together, these two books offer a reliable introduction not only to the subjects which they illuminate but to the mind of a great contemporary scholar and humanist.

A key theme in both books is the historical relationship between the Muslim Middle East since the 7th century and the Christian, later the secular, West. Islam and Christianity each claimed to be the revelation of a universally valid monotheistic truth. From the beginning of the struggle between the two, and for many centuries thereafter, Christendom was on the defensive, threatened by an expansive, prosperous, and technologically more advanced Islam. Indeed, as Lewis writes, "there seemed every reason why Islam should triumph and Europe succumb."

The Muslim threat did not fade for a full millennium. As late as the 16th century, the ambassador of the Holy Roman Empire to Constantinople warned of an impending conquest of Europe by the overwhelming power of the centralized, disciplined Ottoman state. The turning point occurred a century or so later when, in 1683, Ottoman armies were forced to abandon a siege of Vienna and then, for the next decade, were pressed into a general retreat from Central Europe.

The Ottoman defeat opened a new and radically different phase in relations between Islam and the West. Muslims sought to acquire Western military science, the better to resist the West's encroachments, while still holding at bay habits associated with the infidel that might prove corrupting of traditional Islamic society. Both efforts, in significant measure, failed. Muslims repeatedly lost militarily, and imported Western practices shook the very foundations of their society.

"By 1920," observes Lewis, "it seemed that the triumph of Eu-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rope over Islam was total and final." The majority of the world's Muslims were ruled by non-Muslims. Equally significantly, many Muslims had lost confidence in the rightness of their own ways. The interaction with the West had brought profound cultural change, in legal codes, dress, and personal relations. And that change induced feelings not only of inferiority but of resentment and, inevitably, vengefulness. Lewis writes:

> It is easy to understand the rage of the traditional Muslim confronted with the modern world. Schooled in a religious culture in which, from the beginning, rightness has meant supremacy, he has seen that supremacy lost in the world to Western power; lost in his own country to foreign intruders, with their foreign ways and their Westernized protégés; lost in his own home to emancipated women and rebellious children.

This is the real source of the problem described by the authors of *Civilization and the West* and glibly misattributed by them, and many others, to events beginning in 1948. It remains to be seen how much in the Middle East will change as a result of the recent, widely-heralded Israeli-PLO accord. But those who believe, like Lewis, that the core of the Middle East's problems is a clash of civilizations, in which one culture, Islam, rejects the other, while at the same time feeling gravely threatened by it, cannot have high expectations.

One of Lewis's essays, "Palestine: On the History and Geography of a Name," should be of special interest to aspiring peacemakers, as it details the arbitrariness of the borders between Israel and its neighbors. Coming from the word "Philistine," which originally denoted the coastal region around Gaza, the name "Palestine" was reintroduced by the Romans after their suppression of the Jewish revolts in the 1st century C.E. The province, extending eastward across the Jordan River, was later divided into Filastin and Urdunn after the Arab conquests. (The division between the two ran horizontally, between north and south, and not vertically, between east and west, as it does now.) "Filastin" and "Urdunn" disappeared as administrative units after the Muslim defeat of the Crusaders in the 12th century, only to reappear with the British conquest of the area in 1917-18.

The demarcation of Syria's border with mandatory Palestine is no less arbitrary. As Lewis tells us, the western Golan Heights were transferred to Syria from Palestine in order to avoid splitting the property of a certain Amir Mahmud al-Fadl, a local sheikh and large landowner. When the first Arab-Israeli war ended in 1949, the Arabs insisted that the armistice lines were not final boundaries. Damascus has asserted, often and loudly, that it will not abandon "one meter" of its land, and this presumably includes the territory on the Golan Heights which only yesterday was attached to "Palestine."

Another of Lewis's essays sheds an interesting if finally ambiguous light on the most recent of America's encounters with Islam, now taking place in New York City. A group of Muslim émigrés, most of them here illegally, stand indicted of waging a war of urban terrorism against the United States under the leadership of a blind, fundamentalist Egyptian sheikh. But in "Legal and Historical Reflections on the Position of Muslim Populations Under Non-Muslim Rule," Lewis suggests that, by their own principles, extremist Muslims should not be living in New York City in the first place. Traditionally, Muslims were expected to live under Muslim rule in order to conform to Islamic law. The voluntary migration of millions of Muslims to the territories of unbelievers is without precedent.

A further complication is raised by another essay bearing on recent events, "The Egyptian Murder Case." There, Lewis rebuts the claim that President Anwar Sadat of Egypt was murdered by Muslim fundamentalists for having made peace with Israel. Rather, in the fundamentalists' view, the major crime of Sadat was his abrogation of Islamic law "by the introduction and imposition of laws and usages imported from the outside world." Lewis quotes 'Abd al-Salam Faraj, one of the most significant intellectual mentors of Egypt's Islamic Jihad:

> There are people who say that the occasion for *jihad* today is the liberation of Jerusalem; . . . certainly this is an obligation. . . . [But] the fight against the near enemy takes precedence over the fight against the distant enemy. . . . To begin by attacking imperialism is a useless and inglorious work; . . . we must concentrate on our own Islamic problem.

Does this mean that Sheikh Omar Abdel-Rahman, the alleged mastermind of the World Trade Center bombing, has broken with the established views of his contemporaries by giving priority to the "useless and inglorious work" of "attacking imperialism"? This is a point on which we may yet be enlightened as the trial progresses.

Lewis treats Islam with immense respect. A long, established tradition, reflecting many centuries of collective wisdom, Islam is a religion that gives meaning, dignity, and purpose to the lives of its adherents. As a civilization, moreover, Islam has historically compared favorably with other societies in many tests of tolerance. Although it may lack the openness of Western democracies, there is nothing in the history of Islam to compare with the most egregious outrages in the history of the West, ranging from the 15th-century expulsion of Jews and Muslims from Spain to the Nazi Holocaust of this century.

As Lewis points out, moreover, the many terrible deeds done today in the name of Islam are without sanction in Islamic tradition. The brutal mistreatment of innocent hostages, the blowing up of civilian airplanes, the bombing of the World Trade Center, all are violations of Islamic morality and law. Yet it is also true, as Lewis is sadly forced to note, that the claims of the self-styled fighters for Islam who commit such deeds are not convincingly repudiated by accredited Muslim authorities. Most

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recently, the world beheld the brutal treatment of the body of a slain American serviceman in Somalia, a Muslim land. Although Islamic law strictly forbids the desecration of the dead, which Muslim authority condemned the deed?

Indeed, some aspects of Islamic political culture today seem hardly comprehensible, which is why we are so indebted to Lewis's careful historical reconstructions. To give one final example: Lewis brilliantly analyzes the paradox of Arab and Muslim support for Saddam Hussein. In the 1980's, Saddam was the defender of the traditional order of the Gulf sheikhs and the champion of secular modernism against Iran's religious fanaticism, anathema to both religious and social reformers. Saddam ruled as a tyrant, before conquering another people, the Kuwaitis, and brutalizing them as well. Finally, when he was weakened by defeat at the hands of the U.S.-led coalition, most of his own population rose against him.

Yet there he still is, in power today. What could possibly be the appeal? Hostility to the West, and the prospect that Saddam raised of a bold Muslim challenge to it. And this hostility is properly understood as the result of the historical developments described so masterfully by Bernard Lewis.

The Case for Fusion

A PLACE AT THE TABLE: THE GAY INDIVIDUAL IN AMERICAN SOCIETY. By BRUCE BAWER. *Poseidon. 268 pp. $21.00.*

Reviewed by
RICHARD BROOKHISER

A THIRD of the way through *A Place at the Table*, Bruce Bawer recalls "a cocktail party for young conservative writers held at the New York headquarters of a right-wing think tank. . . . I looked around the room and thought to myself: *this is the gayest crowd I've ever seen outside of a gay bar.*"

I was at that cocktail party, and there were indeed a number of gay conservatives there. Was their presence anomalous? Is their existence? Bawer, a poet, literary critic, contributor to the *Wall Street Journal* and the *New Criterion*, and a homosexual, would say that the answer these days is yes, if you credit the rhetoric and the behavior of most vocal gays and conservatives. But he hopes to change this state of affairs.

Between homosexuality and at least one strand of conservatism, the libertarian, there is no conflict, since modern libertarianism is a philosophy of process, incurious about origins or ends, and homosexuals of a more traditional disposition have over the years fit their sexuality and their world view together in a variety of *ad-hoc* ways. But recently, a few individuals have proposed something more radical: a fusion, in which homosexuals would behave conservatively (especially by entering into monogamous unions), and conservatives would accept homosexuality (including gay marriage) without reservations. Andrew Sullivan, editor of the *New Republic*, who is invariably identified in that magazine's advertisements for itself as a conservative gay Catholic, was the pioneer. Now comes *A Place at the Table.*

Bawer's proposed resolution reflects his experience, and he has stitched patches of memoir into this book in order to help explain himself. He grew up in Middle Village, Queens—the very neighborhood that last year revolted successfully against the sexual agenda of New York's Rainbow Curriculum. When he was nine, he was taken to a rally for the mayoral campaign of William F. Buckley, Jr.; when he was twelve, he passed out pamphlets for Nixon. For the next few years, prompted by medical books, he awaited the end of latency, but it never seemed to come. He crossed the bridge to homosexuality one day in college, and that night neglected to say his prayers for the first time since

RICHARD BROOKHISER *is a senior editor at* National Review *and a columnist for the* New York Observer.

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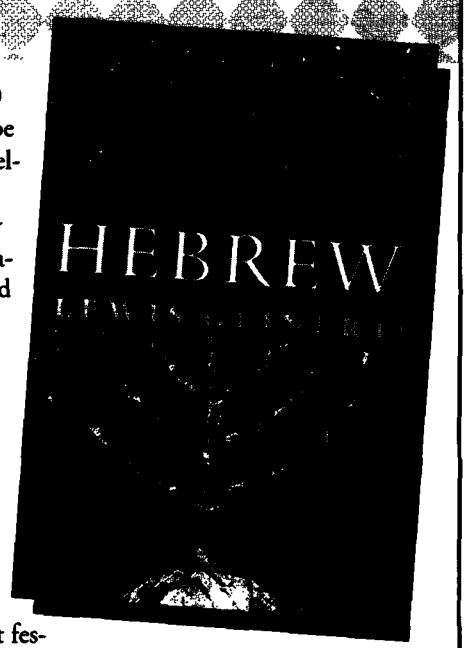

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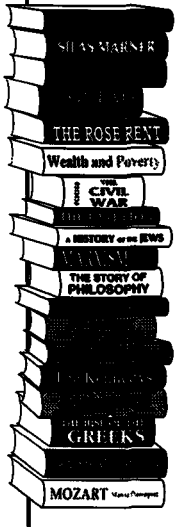

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childhood. He resumed them upon joining the Episcopal Church, under the sponsorship of the man who has now been his lover for six years.

Bawer addresses most of the book to two disparate target audiences—"subculture" gays and "homophobes"—and he flays them both. He finds the gay subculture stifling, as if homosexuals had left their closets for the basement. When, in a review, Bawer panned Allen Ginsberg's *Collected Poems*, Ginsberg asked, "Is Bruce homophobic?"—as if that could be the only reason for quarreling with Ginsberg's metrics or his persona. Subculture promiscuity also strikes Bawer as compulsive and immoral, while subculture activism of the ACT-UP variety—"ecstatic, irrational, existential, orgasmic"—strikes him as displaced promiscuity.

On the other hand, Bawer charges conservatives with ignorance about homosexuality and how it arises, and he accuses a host of conservative public figures, from the religious Right to George Bush, of demonizing gays (often cynically) for political gain. Indeed, they have done worse—for, in Bawer's view, mainstream ignorance and prejudice are what created the subculture in the first place. "The aspects of [gay life] that come in for criticism," he writes, "are *not* intrinsic aspects of homosexuality but . . . manifestations of institutionalized prejudice."

THE overall effect of both these sections of the book is scattershot, as of a sheaf of op-ed pieces Bawer forgot to put in the mail, and his shoddy handling of some conservative figures accomplishes the strange feat of making me wonder if he is being fair to Allen Ginsberg. But the fundamental case he puts to conservatives is a simple one.

Homosexuality, Bawer argues, is natural. We become homosexual or heterosexual in the womb, or very early in life, and no one veers from his nature except through self-deception or compulsion. Those who, like E.L. Pattullo in COMMENTARY ("Straight Talk About Gays," December 1992), worry about possible "waverers" who might go either way, do not know what they are talking about: "Take my word for what I feel," Bawer explains. The proper stance toward homosexuality is acceptance; to disapprove of it—even while tolerating it—is like disapproving of left-handedness.

Given all this, according to Bawer, the "sensible" and "conservative" course for an accepting society is to ensure "that homosexuals can grow into well-integrated and productive members of it as easily as their heterosexual counterparts." To that end, "the cornerstone issue of the gay-rights movement should be the legal recognition of gay unions . . . [c]all them what you will, marriages and domestic partnerships or whatever."

This is as clear a statement of the fusion case as we are likely to get. It is an argument from nature, and the goal is marriage. Once that goal is reached, hatred, self-hatred, and the gay subculture will wither.

A NUMBER of obstacles stand in the way of Bawer's vision, one accidental, others intrinsic to the case. His blunt premise, amounting almost to a form of Calvinism, that sexual identity is locked in concrete, tries to prove too much. For the truth is that people *do* slide across the sexual spectrum in both directions, and would probably slide more were it not for the accumulation of commitments, as well as that process which in some is maturity, in others loss of energy. Bawer treats all such shifts as uncoverings of one's true nature. In a poet and a student of literature, such iron determinism about the variousness and unpredictability of life is surprising.

Still, the fact of indeterminacy begs the question of what society should do about adults who are settled in homosexuality. This is where the intrinsic barriers to Bawer's program arise. The first is religion. Every time he says his prayers, Bawer has access to a higher Authority than book reviewers. To deal with the mass of Christian tradition that is contrary to his position, Bawer lets the gay histo-

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rian John Boswell walk the reader through half-a-dozen problematic biblical texts, making the difficulties vanish.

But even if Boswell's readings were correct—and one of them, even in Bawer's summary, suggests the workings of what might be called the Warren Court school of biblical exegesis—this is an argument that would convince only fundamentalists. Other Christians give weight to moral reasoning, or dogmatic pronouncements on the subject. Even the liberal churches of the Protestant mainline have balked at blessing homosexual marriage. Homosexual Christians who insist on it will have to content themselves with subculture churches—the present Metropolitan Church, or post-schism portions of mainline churches.

The second obstacle is children. Children appear at Bawer's table only in discussions of the coming-of-age struggles of homosexual boys, or in lamentations over the havoc wrought when a male homosexual comes out after first trying to be a husband and a father. "Marriage is recognized by the state," says Bawer at one point, "because it reinforces civilized values by enhancing the reliability of workers and the stability of homes." Not quite. Marriage is instituted primarily to produce and protect children. If the stork brought babies, and social workers raised them, we would not need marriage. Hence the bias toward heterosexual unions in all places and times.

Of course, humans being ingenious, these unions take many forms. Indeed, the form Americans have long considered ideal—a distillate of Christianity, capitalism, and a limited egalitarianism—has been so worn away by bastardy in the lower class and divorce in the middle that it is doubtful whether a bare majority still subscribe to it. If homosexual unions are legalized, it will be as a skirmish in the victory of slow-motion polygamy—as a result of a loosening of ties, not the strengthening of them that Bawer desires.

A third obstacle to the fulfillment of Bawer's wishes is their Arcadian quality. Bawer imagines a world purged of guilt or conflict. In one characteristic sentence, he tries to describe what would happen "if gay children were educated to be as comfortable with their sexuality as straight children." But even if Bawer's social program were enacted in its entirety, so long as the overwhelming majority of gay children are raised by mothers and fathers, the gay life will be fraught with strangeness. Some homosexual women try to square the circle by resorting to artificial insemination or adoption, and movies from *La Cage aux Folles* to *The Wedding Banquet* have expressed the having-it-all fantasy of gay fatherhood. But it remains a fantasy. To walk the way of homosexuality is to foreclose the way that made you.

And how "comfortable" does Bawer think heterosexuals are with their sexuality? In a notably acrid passage, he surveys all the troubled marriages he knows, in the course of boasting about his own felicity. Sensing the vaunting tone, he pulls back to assure the reader that he is not more virtuous than these straight sad sacks, only luckier. But Bawer need not apologize. Marriage is hard, because life is.

THESE are reasons for denying Bawer what he wants, or rather explanations of why he will not get it. But this leaves the question of what the conservatively inclined homosexual can expect from straight conservatives. The answer is, nothing. Nothing, but a state that honors contracts, strangers who mind their own business, families who do their duty, and friends who love their neighbors. In a totally different context, Bawer advises homosexuals who are still in thrall to the subculture that "being gay *is* an inconvenience; so are a lot of things; get on with it. . . ." He would certainly reject the application of this advice to the fusion case he presents. But it is the best advice that conservative homosexuals can take.

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LOVE AND FRIENDSHIP. By ALLAN BLOOM. *Simon & Schuster. 590 pp. $25.00.*

Reviewed by WILLIAM KRISTOL

IN AN age of declaimers and debunkers, pontificators and pundits, the late Allan Bloom was a teacher. For over three decades, Bloom attracted and inspired students at the universities of Cornell, Toronto, and Chicago, where he taught the great books and the permanent questions considered in those books. It is fitting that in *Love and Friendship,* completed shortly before his death in October 1992, Bloom writes above all as a teacher, an "honest broker for greater persons and writers than I."

It is fitting, too, that in his last book Bloom should address the fundamental human phenomena of love and friendship, as well as such cognate issues as marriage, religion, and the nature of men and women. Bloom's students came to him with certain presuppositions about these topics, presuppositions that in his view often made education difficult. That is why in the mid-1980's Bloom interrupted his life of teaching in order to write *The Closing of the American Mind.* Political correctness, with its theoretical underpinning of an easygoing relativism oddly mixed with an intolerant radicalism, had to be taken on, according to Bloom, not so much for political reasons as for the sake of real education. In this sense *Love and Friendship* might be said to complete the intention of *The Closing of the American Mind*; having first shattered our complacency, Bloom now gives us a taste of learning.

Thus, after a fine polemical introduction, Bloom more or less leaves today's culture wars behind in order to study some of the greatest writers on love and friendship: Rousseau, Stendhal, Austen, Flaubert, Tolstoy, Shakespeare, and Plato. In turning to these writers, Bloom not only means to help liberate us from current orthodoxies and their prescriptions for what we should feel and think; he also means to explicate, at considerable length and with great care, what his chosen writers have to teach. That is perhaps more than we are likely to be able to learn. Bloom's own relation to these writers—a mixture of kinship, affection, wonder, and humility—is captured in his characteristic comment about Shakespeare:

> The result of this latest reading of Shakespeare for me is the renewed conviction that there is nothing I think or feel, whether high or low, that he has not thought or felt, as well as expressed, better than I have. This is a personal affront because one likes to think that one possesses a uniqueness and special worth that no one else can grasp. This is also a collective affront to the prejudice that our age really knows important things especially in matters sexual that give it a special superiority over all other ages.

I will not try to do justice to the quality or subtlety of Bloom's interpretations in *Love and Friendship.* His readings are at once careful and bold, his accounts at once passionate and analytical. Anyone who cares about the thinkers he discusses, or indeed about love and friendship, will benefit from this very impressive book. And since, as Bloom says, "understanding love and friendship in their manifold experiences is the key to self-knowledge," his book may even help its readers along in the human quest for self-knowledge.

THIS quest has been made particularly difficult in our time by the forces that conspire to close minds and impoverish souls, and that have led to what Bloom calls a "fall of eros." In *Love and Friendship* Bloom traces this fall back to the beginnings of modern natural science and the political theory of liberal individualism. In the first half of the book, he focuses on the ultimately self-defeating effort of the past two centuries to reverse that fall.

Bloom explains how the Romantic rebellion against bourgeois so-

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ciety was launched by Rousseau, who sought to construct, or to reconstruct, a longing for love in the soul of modern man, and to find higher goals for his imagination than the pursuit of material self-interest. But Rousseau could locate no solid ground for this longing, and no solid basis for those goals. As is suggested by the 19th-century novels which Bloom next proceeds to discuss, the "romantic project" could not overcome the relentless demystification of modernity. Romanticism succeeded only in devaluing bourgeois individualism; in the end, it could not prevent, and it even contributed to, today's "deeroticization of the world."

How, then, can we ascend from today's "dreary scene" of easy sex, interspersed with harsh attempts to suppress "sexism," to a world of human love and friendship? Bloom looks to Shakespeare for instruction. Shakespeare is central to Bloom's project because he is still reasonably accessible to us, and because the serious and imaginative study of Shakespeare can teach us so much about human possibilities and limitations. Not only does Shakespeare present us with all the varieties of love and friendship, he shows us that beneath these varieties there exists a natural human perception of and longing for the beautiful. In particular, the study of Shakespeare can help lead us to "something of a premodern view of man's relations with his fellows," and thus provide "serious, and perhaps more satisfactory, alternatives to our characteristic ways of looking at things."

Finally, Bloom's Shakespeare leads back to the truly premodern figure of Plato, and from there to a brilliant comparison of the radically opposed teachings of Socrates and Nietzsche. If, for Socrates, love and friendship are central to an understanding of the human soul and its quest for completion, for Nietzsche the essential human condition is solitude, and the will to power is more fundamental than the will to love. Bloom pays tribute to the extraordinary "psychological riches" contained in Nietzsche's thought; but he inclines toward Socrates as giving a truer account of our nature.

If Socrates is right, Bloom concludes, then today's "fall of eros" need not be permanent. Human nature remains open to love, and to the quest for self-knowledge. What is needed is an education that will free us from the perverse and politically-correct interpretations of human nature that surround us, such as radical feminism's attempt to obliterate the difference between the sexes, and its disdain for the very ideas of maleness and femaleness. Through such an effort of liberation from the liberationists of our day we might yet recover an understanding of our natures, an understanding now "buried under successive layers of ideological ash."

Love and Friendship stands as a rebuke to the ever-increasing volume of such "ideological ash," and also as a means of rescue. Moreover, in reading it, one can begin to see how and why Allan Bloom was so powerful a presence in the classroom. He wrote this book, he explains,

> while recovering from a serious illness, and strangely this activity turned that period into one of the most wondrous times of my life. . . . When I went to bed at night I looked forward to getting up in the morning and resuming this living relationship to the books, and I was lifted above my petty concerns by them.

As he did in his lifetime to his students, Bloom manages to convey "this living relationship to the books" to us, his posthumous readers, and thus lifts us, however imperfectly, above the often suffocatingly petty concerns of the age. That is what great teachers do, and what true friends are for.

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